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MANMADE WOMEN:
Technology, Femininity, and the Cinema

by

Elizabeth J. Fulton

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Comparative Studies in Literature, Film and Religion

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1995

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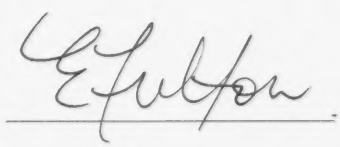

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June 26, 95
Date

Abstract

This thesis considers the sexual politics and poetic strategies involved in the conjunction of technology and the female body in the following films: Fritz Lang's 1926 film Metropolis, the more recent Alien trilogy comprising Ridley Scott's Alien (1979), James Cameron's Aliens (1986), and David Fincher's Alien^3 (1992), and Duncan Gibbon's film Eve of Destruction (1991). Drawing upon the work of Julia Kristeva, psychoanalytic and feminist film theory, and recent feminist critical theory, it contends that the intersection between technology and femininity is a site of significant ambivalence in which the maternal plays a pivotal role. With attention to issues of subjectivity and representation, gender and postmodern anxiety, this project attempts to negotiate the differences as well as the promising similarities between images of 'manmade women' in the cinema and feminist theoretical models such as the cyborg proposed by Donna Haraway.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Seaneen O'Rourke, and to my best friend and companion, Michael Lyne.

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Introduction

> The *sexo-semiotics of technology* recognizes the two-faced character of modern technology, which generates for every desirable, legitimate and supposedly practical tool a pile of useless, toxic wastes and uninhabitable lands for which no one wants to take responsibility; for every *shiny good* product there's a *slimy bad* by-product expressive of the irrational and excremental fantasies which have always sought cover under the crystal abstractions of masculine thought. For in science-fiction culture particularly, technologies are perceived as modes of reproduction in themselves, according to perverse myths of fertility in which man replicates himself without the aid of a woman.
>
> -Zoe Sophia, "Exterminating Fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-Semiotics of Extraterrestrialism"

In a time when technology increasingly challenges the limits and boundaries of human embodiment, the cyborg has emerged as a compelling figure. As Teresa de Lauretis points out, "Technology is now, not only in a distant, science fictional future, an extension of our sensory capacities; it shapes our perceptions and cognitive processes, mediates our relationships with objects of the material and physical world, and our relationships with our own and other bodies."[1] While some critics lament its ill effects, Donna Haraway, author of the noted "A Cyborg Manifesto,"[2] finds the "technology is now" scenario described by de Lauretis a hopeful one that holds political promise. By way of "ironic political myth" she argues that the technologization of bodies has already resulted in a hybrid subjectivity

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[1] The Technological Imagination: Theories and Fictions (Madison: Coda Press, 1980): 167.

[2] "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature (New York and London: Routledge, 1991): 149-181.

combining both organism and machine, whose inherent and potential value lies in its de(con)struction of hitherto "naturalized" identities. In her view, the widespread diffusion of information technology has created a fluid and chaotic situation within which disruption and contestation are possible. "Hyperreality" thus holds promise for Haraway precisely because it is a site of categorical breakdown where classical rationalities and reified definitions of "nature," historically most harmful to women and other colonized groups, are unrecoverable. The subject borne of this breakdown, the cyborg, signals the dissolution of boundaries between human/animal and machine as well as subject and object, private and public, presence and absence, simulacrum and real. As she announces: "By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics."[3]

Haraway's postmodern "cyborg politics" function to set modernist ideologies on par with late twentieth-century reality by collapsing ideological dualisms that continue to structure Western thought and the repressive gender, racial and economic hierarchies they have been founded upon. For Haraway, technology as both tool and social construct and the cyborg as an alternative, more appropriate, subjectivity not only call into question fixed notions of identity and difference, but by 'denaturalizing' and thus reinventing these very categories, cyborg subjectivity and technology as praxis offer a way out of the social hierarchies and essentialisms that so inevitably underpin them.

Arguably, the 'virtual-reality' interface being hastened by accelerated technological development (and fed by consumer capitalism) demands, as electronic technology and its offshoots develop at breakneck speeds, new ways of negotiating the perceptual gaps

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[3]Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature (New York and London: Routledge, 1991): 150.

between 'real' and simulated experience---hence the vicarious nature of subjectivity, theorized by critics ranging from Jean Baudrillard to Fredric Jameson, in a postmodern "cybernetic" age. As Celeste Olalquiaga writes: "bodies have become the locus of a fierce battle between permanence and evanescence."[4] That "we are cyborgs," as Haraway announces, can be measured not only by the impact high technology has had in terms of the reorganization of everyday "psychic/sensory" experience, but also, as Katherine Hayles observes, by the sheer number of people (which she projects at 10%) with "electronic pacemakers, prosthetic limbs, hearing aids, drug implants, and artificial joints"[5] and also I would add, by the increasing numbers of people, notably women, willingly altering their bodies through cosmetic surgery and other artificial means. Thus while high technology and the electronic media might contribute to the de-materialization of corporeality at cognitive, experiential, and interactive levels, technology also, through more direct processes of intervention including surgical and medical treatments, increasingly wields the power to reshape and remake bodies at fundamentally real and corporeal levels. Susan Bordo argues that the material body has been subsumed by a "paradigm of plasticity," an ideology and technology of the body "fueled by fantasies of re-arranging, transforming, and correcting, an ideology of limitless improvement and change, defying the historicity, the morality, and indeed the very materiality of the body."[6] As she further points out, this

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[4]Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Sensibilities (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1992): 10.

[5]"The Seductions of Cyberspace," Rethinking Technologies. Verena Andermatt Conley, ed. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993): 173.

[6]""Material Girl': The Effacements of Postmodern Culture," The Female Body: Figures, Styles, Speculations," Laurence Goldstein, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991): 106.

paradigm is present in a number of contexts, "including much of contemporary discourse on the body, both casual and theoretical, popular and academic."[7]

However, the technological post-gender, post-"border war" utopia that Haraway so optimistically envisions still remains a far cry from the existential displacement and epistemological anxiety registered in many popular discourses. For example, a number of relatively recent science fiction films reveal a fascination, not altogether free of apprehension and anxiety toward the technological, with the hybridized or simulated human/machine subject. Hence the pervasive phenomena of robots, cyborgs, androids, and replicants in films like Android (1982), Blade Runner (1982), the Alien trilogy (1979, 1986, 1992), Cyborg (1989), Cherry 2000 (1989), Hardware (1990), Total Recall (1990), Universal Soldier (1991), Terminator (1984) and Terminator II (1991), RoboCop (1987) and RoboCop II (1990), Eve of Destruction (1991), etc. Such films, as Claudia Springer notes, are preoccupied with sexual difference,[8] although the majority accommodate little space for the disruptive feminist subjectivity embodied by Haraway's feminist cyborg. This is not to say, however, that such discourses cannot accommodate more progressive readings--as we will discover.

What is striking about a number of these films is the sheer presence of the physical body, despite extensive technologization and alteration. Moreover, the terms within which such films visualize the body are strikingly gendered, often according to prevailing cultural norms. This can be explained in part by the systemic and narrative requirements of the commercial mainstream or Hollywood film, where the principle of sexual difference

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[7]Ibid., 107.

[8]"Muscular Circuitry: The Invincible Armored Cyborg in the Cinema," Genders 18 (Winter 1993): 91.

is still largely upheld. Today's films are also more consistent than other media, including television, comics, and literary cyberpunk, in their depiction of stereotypically gendered cyborgs and robots.[9] Constance Penley has gone so far as to argue that as the nature of masculinity and femininity are increasingly called into question, it is ironically the science fiction genre "that alone remains capable of supplying the configurations of sexual difference required by the classical cinema."[10] As she states,

> If there is increasingly less practical difference between men and women, there is more than enough difference between human and alien (The Man Who Fell to Earth, Starman), a human and a cyborg/replicant (Android, Blade Runner), or a human from the present and one from the future (The Terminator). In these films the question of sexual difference--a question whose answer is no longer 'self-evident'--is displaced onto the more remarkable difference between human and the other.[11]

It is thus significant that while boundary breakdowns between humans and machines are freely explored in the science fiction cinema, certain boundaries, especially sexual ones tend to remain inflexible; and if not, they are often displaced altogether, as Constance Penley remarks, "onto the more remarkable difference between the human and the other."[12] The most popular and identifiable of cyborgs for example, the Terminator and

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[9]Ibid., 88. Springer notes television examples such as Max Headroom and Star Trek: The Next Generation's Data, both of whom are not typical of the Hollywood paradigm. In many cyberpunk texts, the body is disparaged as "meat" in favor of the "bodiless exultation of cyberspace," as described in Gibson's Neuromancer. See Scott Bukatman, Terminal Identity (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993).

[10]"Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia," Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema. Annette Kuhn, ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1990): 123.

[11]Ibid., 123

[12]Ibid., 123.

RoboCop, respond to the postmodern body/technology "border-war" by violently protecting and conserving the (male) body with muscular and hyper-masculine, impenetrable borders. As if the body was gender's last refuge, sexual identity is reconfigured by these cyborgs in the form of *bodily armor*.[13] Springer argues that figures such as RoboCop and the Terminator recuperate anachronistic metaphors more appropriate to industrial technology--i.e. hard industrial phallic strength--in reaction to the frighteningly mysterious and hidden properties of today's microelectronic technology. As she asserts,

> Electronic technology no longer evokes the metaphor of externally visible musculature; instead, its bodily equivalents are the concealed and fluid internal systems. And in their interaction with humans, computers offer a radically new relationship, one that no longer fortifies physical prowess. It is this feminization of electronic technology and the passivity of the human interaction with computers that the hypermasculine cyborg in film resists.[14]

While these cyborgs, much like the fascist *Friekorps* soldiers analyzed by Klaus Theweleit in his two-volume work Male Fantasies,[15] preserve male ego boundaries with masculine armor, the feminine is, in contrast, constructed as an object of horror. The feminine is thus aligned with the "leaky distinctions" and "fluid internal systems," more appropriate to Haraway's cyborg, while reflecting, because it signifies the threat of mutability and dissolution, precisely that which the male subject is compelled to repudiate.[16]

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[13]See Claudia Springer, "Muscular Circuitry" and Hal Foster, "Armor Fou," OCTOBER 56 (1991): 64-97. Like Springer and Foster, I refer here mainly to male cyborgs, although certainly figures such as Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) in Terminator II who is strongly identified with technology (especially big guns), and muscular Terminator-like strength, fall into this category.

[14]Springer, 96.

[15]Klaus Theweleit, Male Fantasies 1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) and Male Fantasies 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

This brings us to the important, and perhaps more complex, question of the *female* cyborg, a question which relates to broader issues concerning the politics and poetics involved in the conjunction of technology and the female body in the cinema. Indeed it is this complex conjunction, as well as the numerous questions it raises, that underwrite the present project. Not surprisingly, cinematic female cyborgs, figures conventionally articulated through the codes of femininity, mirror back, albeit in an inverse form, the fantasies which inform the armored male cyborg. Thus we have the stereotypical and fetishized figure of the "fembot," the "pleasure model"--the ultimate male fantasy and favored mascot of male rationality and progress. The literal construction of woman as (technological) object of desire, tends to function on a number of levels, namely that of fetishism, to guarantee the integrity of the (armored) male subject. As an object of fetishistic technophilia, her body is invested with the desire and fascination attributed to machines. At the same time, this displaced investment often serves to sublimate or conceal what the female (reproductive) body really signifies--i.e. lack, otherness, the Real--while also, in the process, fulfilling the centuries-old scientific fantasy of male self-regeneration, without the aid of woman.[17]

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[16]Interestingly, these are metaphors embodied by Schwarzenagger's nemesis in Terminator 2: Judgement Day (1991), the T-1000 model terminator, a truly uncanny and shape-shifting creature made of liquid metal who is able to assume or simulate any shape of similar size, penetrate any opening or barrier, absorb punches and bullets as well as repair any wound or puncture it sustains, melt itself down to liquid form and then back into solid form, etc. Springer observes,

> He is the embodiment of feminine fluidity and as such is a particularly frightening adversary for the [101 model Terminator] since he does not fight in conventionally masculine ways. More important, he represents the loss of bodily boundaries that the 101 maintains with a vengeance with layers of leather clothing, big guns and motorcycles. (96)

[17]Rosi Braidotti, "Mothers, Monsters, and Machines," Nomadic Subjects (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984): 87.

But the technological woman is also figured--and this relates to what fetishism would disavow--as a monstrous phantasm, a symptom of technology's more frightening and destructive potential. In this latter incarnation, most notably exemplified in the cinema by Fritz Lang's 1926 film Metropolis, technology *is* woman; the horror technology evokes, its power and its otherness are equated (and conflated) with the horror of female sexuality. The technological woman in this case represents precisely that which the technological imagination would attempt to disavow through the processes of sublimation and fetishization alluded to above. But it is really the *maternal* body that looms large in such phantasms. Even when 'absent,' displaced or effaced by technology's "shiny good" products,[18] the maternal is present in what Foucault describes as the "mute solidity of a thing."[19] For it is precisely she, as we will discover, who provides, in a number of technological discourses, the imaginary link between technology and various unsettling questions concerning origins, history, subjectivity, the body, and sexual identity it raises. The maternal therefore emerges in such texts as a highly unstable and ambivalent figure, oscillating between being, on the one hand, an object of longing and on the other, an object of horror and abjection.

The films assembled for study here all reflect and, in different ways, thematize this double movement toward and away from the mother. Lang's expressionist film Metropolis, the subject of Chapter One and the *locus classicus* of the cinematic machine-woman, locates both technology and women within the realm of the primordial and grotesque. In this chapter I introduce the category of the technological-feminine,

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[18]Zoe Sophia, "Exterminating Fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-Semiotics of Extraterrestrialism," Diacritics (Summer 1984).

[19]Michel Foucault, The Order of Things (New York: Vintage Books, 1973): 374.

following Barbara Creed's notion of the monstrous-feminine, in order to address the role played by technology in the representation of the machine-woman as monster. While in many ways the 'machine-vamp' of Metropolis is prototypical in its fetishistic sexualization of the female robot, it is her presentation as a monster, as an object of both fascination *and* horror, that is most illustrative of the film's conceptualization of both machines and women. In Metropolis technology and femininity--the technological-feminine--come together and become confused on literal and unconscious levels. Although the film gives no outward or narrative indication of why the robot is a woman,[20] the association between powerful machines, aligned with the irrational and uncanny forces of nature, carnival and the occult and Woman, reduced, in turn, to her most archaic and wily maternal principles, becomes, as we will discover, a logical one. Moreover, such metaphorical associations make a great deal of sense in a larger discursive realm where the association of woman with the monstrous and the abject is deeply embedded. As I will argue by way of Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic work on abjection and the grotesque, the maternal is central to Metropolis's profoundly ambivalent representation of the technological-feminine.

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[20]The inconsistencies surrounding the figure of the robot, and the motivation for making her female are discussed by the film critic and archivist Enno Patalas in "Metropolis, Scene 103," Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction, Constance Penley, Lynn Spigel and Janet Bergstrom, eds. (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 161-167. In this article he reconstructs with the help of various documents a particular scene ("Scene 103") missing from existing prints of the film. He shows how Rotwang's construction of the robot as female is motivated by his love of Hel, a woman who refused him and married Frederson only to die giving birth to his son, Freder. Thus he argues,

> In this retrospective conception, Hel prefigures the new, artificial woman as her double. She would not merely be "born for him"; she would be born "of him"--daughter and lover in one. He gives this artificial woman the features of the girl with whom the dead woman's son has fallen in love, so as to have him destroyed by her double. Thus he takes his revenge not only on his rival, but also on the son who denied himself to Rotwang when his mother conceived him by another. (167)

In Chapter Two I discuss the Alien trilogy, comprising Ridley Scott's now classic Alien (1979), James Cameron's Aliens (1986) and Alien^3 (1992) by David Fincher. While these films contain no such female robot (only male androids), the way in which they articulate both technology and femininity--this time in relation to fin-de-siècle anxieties circulating around AIDS, gender, sexuality, issues of reproduction and motherhood--are surprisingly similar. Through the visual and now highly sophisticated cinematic conventions of horror, the Alien films express what the fascist imagination latent within Metropolis attempts to repress, hence the "*slimy bad* by-products" of technology described above by Sophia "which have always sought cover under the crystal abstractions of masculine thought." Like Metropolis, each film of the trilogy exposes the spectator to this side of technology by way of a profoundly unsettling encounter with the maternal, the ultimate "slimy bad" who lurks inside computers and aliens--their monstrous biological analogues--and who is eventually found lurking within the heroine Ripley herself. While the figure of Ripley--particularly her political status--has been the object of great critical debate since the release of Alien, my own focus is less on Ripley--although she is read as a more progressive character in relation to the final sequel--than on the particular anxieties evoked by the film's nightmarish and highly feminized spaces as well as the alien itself. For in my view, all of these embody primal fears related to the female body and the implicit horror attached to woman's reproductive powers.

The subject of Chapter Three is Eve of Destruction (Duncan Gibbons, 1991), a cyborg narrative which recycles many of Metropolis's themes. Like Metropolis, it recasts dangers posed by the advances of science and technology in terms of male fears surrounding women and unrepressed female sexuality. Moreover, the cyborg is modeled after and foiled with a fetishized maternal figure; although this time the model, Dr. Eve Simmons, is also the cyborg's creator. But as I will argue, the female cyborg in Eve of

Destruction calls up much larger concerns regarding reproduction and changing constructions of motherhood--particularly the expanding role of technology in human reproduction, and the subsequent destabilization of motherhood as a 'natural' ideal. By refusing, or at the very least neglecting, her traditional role in natural reproduction, and engaging in artificial creation, Dr. Eve Simmons challenges "the linear narrative of conventional biological reproduction"[21]--what Mary Ann Doane has described as the "guarantee of history."[22] Taken together (but not as a whole) the character of Eve Simmons and her cyborg are compelling, especially in light of Haraway's feminist cyborg. While this film is by no means "feminist" (certainly it nostalgically laments the immanent demise of women's traditional roles as mothers), its representation of Eve Simmons and her angry cyborg other is ultimately ambiguous, providing space for alternative readings with feminist implications. These implications will finally be staked out through the lens of Haraway's project, keeping in mind the significant differences between her feminist cyborg and the representation of the cyborg in popular film.

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[21]Cynthia J. Fuchs, "Death is Irrelevant": Cyborgs, Reproduction, and the Future of Male Hysteria," Genders 18 (Winter 1993): 115.

[22]Mary Ann Doane, "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine," Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science. Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1990): 172.

CHAPTER ONE

Technological Femininity as Monstrous Abjection: Fritz Lang's Metropolis

> Woman is the symbol of that terrifying, secret power of the machine which rolls over anything that comes under its wheels, smashes that which gets caught in its cranks, shafts, and belts, and destroys those who attempt to halt the turning of its wheels. And, vice versa, the machine, which coldly, cruelly and relentlessly sacrifices hecatombs of men as if they were nothing, is the symbol of the strangling Minotaur-like nature of woman.
>
> -Eduard Fuchs, Die Frau in der Karikatur[1]

The conjunction of technology and the female body is a popular male fantasy with a long history in the cinema. By most accounts this history reaches as far back as Fritz Lang's Metropolis (1926), a masterwork of German expressionism and one of the defining texts of cinematic science fiction. Featuring a robot in the form of a woman, this film is surprisingly typical of the manner in which the unity of the body and the machine has been imag(in)ed in Western culture from the modernist "bachelor-machine"[2] discourses of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Raymond Roussel, Poe, Melville, E.T.A. Hoffman, Kafka, Freud, and Hans Bellmer, among others, to the postmodern science fiction discourses of today. More importantly however, it is prototypical in its thematic alignment of the terms "mother," "monster," and "machine."[3]

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[1]Eduard Fuchs, Die Frau in der Karikatur (Munich, 1906): 262, quoted in Andreas Huyssen, After the Great Divide (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986): 78.

[2]See Michel Carrouges, Les Machines celibataires (Paris: Editions du Chene, 1976).

[3]I borrow this wording directly from Rosi Braidotti's essay, "Mothers, Monsters, and Machines" in Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 75-93.

In an important discussion of Metropolis,[4] Andreas Huyssen observes that writers and artists increasingly began to imagine technology as woman in the nineteenth century when fears stemming from rapid modernization and "ever more powerful machines" surfaced in popular consciousness. The projection of such fears onto the female body he attributes to castration anxiety: "There are grounds to suspect that we are facing here a complex process of projection and displacement. The fears and perceptual anxieties emanating from ever more powerful machines are recast and reconstructed in terms of the male fear of female sexuality, reflecting, in the Freudian account, the male's castration anxiety."[5] Huyssen goes on to argue that although Metropolis vacillates between two opposing views of modern technology--the expressionist view and that of *Neue Sachlichkeit* or "new objectivity"--it is ultimately aligned, considering its treatment of the "machine-vamp" and use of sophisticated filming techniques, with the discourse of the technophilic *Neue Sachlichkeit*.[6] While his account of Metropolis is in agreement with Siegfried Kracauer's earlier analysis,[7] Huyssen addresses what Kracauer and many other critics have overlooked--that is, the relationship between gender, technology and sexuality played out in the representation of the machine-vamp. In fact Huyssen regards the

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[4]"The Vamp and the Machine," After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[5]Huyssen, 70.

[6]The *Neue Sachlichkeit* ("New Objectivity"), characterizes a movement in the cinema and the visual arts which emerged in Germany during the 1920's. It is marked by an orientation toward realism, a fascination with technological forms and ideas, and a general faith in technical progress. See Siegfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler (USA: Princeton University Press, 1947): 165-180.

[7]From Caligari to Hitler.

machine-vamp as not only crucial to the film's final ideological position but the key to unlocking what Kracauer referred to as the film's "subterranean content."[8]

I do not entirely disagree with Huyssen's assessment of Metropolis and indeed credit him for recognizing the centrality of the technological woman to the film's imaginary. Despite Metropolis's formal qualities and its narrative 'resolution,' however, the film ultimately fails in my view to eliminate or to finally "contain" the unstable elements produced and embodied by the machine-vamp who, for a number of reasons which I shall outline, is a figure of textual insubordination. Moreover, the explicit *naturalization* of the machine-woman reveals that the characteristically expressionist fear of technology she represents is, in the first place, a fear of woman's *nature*, that is, her sexuality and maternal power. Arguably, there is a certain slippage between this fear of woman's nature and the technophilic discourse of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Nevertheless, it is less my concern to 'work through' this binaristic tension, as Huyssen has attempted to do, than to engage with the psychic and archetypal themes encoding the representation of woman and the machine so as to gain further insight into the machine-vamp's inherently uncanny and carnivalesque qualities. It would seem, however, that the conventions used to articulate such themes in Metropolis are indebted more to melodrama, a mode of representation which emphasizes instability, visual and narrative excess, sexual ambiguity, and emotional intensity.[9] Moreover, it is primarily this melodramatic mode, and these qualities of excess and ambiguity, that underwrite the film's representation of technology as well as the anxiety attributed it.

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[8]Ibid., 163.

[9]This is also the bias of Patrice Petro. See her Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

Metropolis tells the story of a futuristic city divided hierarchically between the masters and the proletarian workers who labour the city's lower depths. The city's industrial empire is ruled by Joh Frederson who obsessively monitors his workforce through technological viewing screens. Fearing a rebellion on the part of the discontented workers, to whom the saintly Maria has been preaching peace and social justice ("between the brain that plans and the hands that build, there must be a mediator...the heart..."), Frederson plans a preemptive strike: he has the scientist Rotwang kidnap Maria and transform his robot into her image in order to lead the workers astray; this will provide Frederson with an excuse to suppress any potential insurgency planned by the workers. However, the robot becomes unruly and monstrous beyond both Frederson and Rotwang's expectations. It incites the workers to destroy the machines and to put the fate of their own children at risk. With moments to spare, Freder, Frederson's son, and the true Maria manage to intervene and save the city. Curiously, the class structure is preserved (although in a somewhat 'mediated' fashion) as demonstrated when Frederson and the foreman shake hands. What has up until this point resembled a socialist parable now becomes a fascist dream.

Borrowing from Barbara Creed's notion of the "monstrous-feminine" the "technological-feminine" is proposed here in order to expose and isolate the false Maria's monstrosity as produced through the conjunction of technology and femininity. Unlike the monstrous-feminine which underlines the classic congruity between the monstrous and the female body in Western culture, and in the horror film particularly, the technological-feminine brings together two conceptually opposed terms: "woman" and "technology." This opposition will prove significant for as with other technological women in the cinema it is essential to the false Maria's uncanniness as well as her 'technophilic' appeal.

Technophilia, a particular brand of fetishism, involves pleasure derived through technology. In the cinema the technological woman, be she robot, android or cyborg activates this pleasure in a rather direct way; in fact one might say that as far as technology is concerned, she is the quintessential fetish. An object purged of all abject qualities, a sign of masculine acuity, production, and his territorialization of nature--including natural reproduction--her image is eminently gratifying and pleasurable to look at, especially when she is 'programmed' to be sexually desirable and obedient. Of course she is also a product of 'man's' desire to infuse the spirit of 'life' (nature) into the machine, to naturalize and anthropomorphize his own artifacts--healing, as it were, the split between nature and culture.[10] Writes Andreas Huyssen,

> By creating a female android, Rotwang fulfills the male phantasm of a creation without mother; but more than that, he produces not just any natural life, but woman herself, the epitome of nature...*The most complete technologization of nature appears as renaturalization, as a progress back to nature*.[11]

The trope of the technological-feminine thus presents us with a number of paradoxes, which reflect the equally parodoxical image of technology contained within the film itself. While the technological human or robot presents a denial of the body in the embrace of technology, as exemplified by the fact that Rotwang's robot is ostensibly designed to replace human workers, the false Maria is characterized by a highly charged and abject feminine sexuality. This effectively brings the machine closer to body than the actual woman--the true Maria--the machine has been modeled after. And unlike Maria who remains "true" to her ideal by keeping her femininity safely in check, her mechanical other becomes primal and corporeal, a specular image of the archaic mother. Thus despite being

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[10]Andreas Huyssen, "The Vamp and the Machine," After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986): 71.

[11]Ibid., 71. My emphasis.

a machine, the false Maria is identified with the irrational forces of nature. It is not without irony that she, a product of technological progress and modernity, is finally burned as a witch.

Pleasure in technology therefore reveals itself as ambivalent, especially when displaced onto the female body.[12] As Claude Baible has suggested, the object of technophilia is ultimately transitional, in other words, a compensatory mystification of something unbearably 'real.' He writes:

> The technology plays the role of transitional object, loved with the regressive love still trying to exhaust the pain of foreclosure from the Other, endlessly trying to repair that initial separation, and as such *it is very likely to be the target of displacements*."[13]

Technophilia, supported by the epistem(ophil)ic drive, therefore invariably brings the subject of desire face to face with the phantasm of the maternal, the abject--the place of origin (life) and of end (death). Some psychoanalytic theorists believe that the epistemic/scopophilic question of origin is at the root of *all* scientific knowledge and investigation.[14] As Rosi Braidotti has observed, the desire to know, which has become synonymous in our culture with the desire to see, is ultimately related to the problem of representing and controlling one's origins, "of answering the most childish and consequentially fundamental questions: 'where did I come from?'"[15] She writes:

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[12]As Mary Ann Doane argues, "[t]echnology in cinema is the object of a quite precise form of fetishism, and science fiction would logically be a privileged genre for the technophile." See "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine," Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science. Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1990): 173.

[13]Qtd. in Doane, 173. My emphasis.

[14]See Braidotti, 75-94.

[15]Braidotti, 90.

> Scientific knowledge becomes, in this perspective, an extremely perverted version of that original question. The desire to go and see how things work is related to primitive sadistic drives...Knowing in this mode is the result of the scopophilic drive--to go and see, and the sadistic one--to rip it apart physically so as to master it intellectually. All this is related to the incestuous drive, to the web of curiosity and taboos surrounding the one site of certain origin--the mother's body.[16]

The ground of technophilia and the technological-feminine then is, like that of the monstrous-feminine, the (abject and fetishized) maternal body. Nevertheless, as we will discover, the subject of technology raises a number of distinct questions--especially in the space of cinema, an apparatus predicated on epistemophilia, scopophilia, and also technophilia.

The woman-as-monster and, as I am arguing, the monster/mother-as-machine, bring us into the territory of the abject, mainly by virtue of its doubleness and ambiguity which simultaneously provoke horror and fascination. Creed extends Kristeva's psychoanalytic formulation of abjection to the horror film to argue that the cinematic construction of the female monster, unlike the male monster, is symbolically grounded in the idea of sexual difference and the feminine--specifically, the reproductive body. In The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, Kristeva broadly defines the abject as that which "disturbs identity, system, order."[17] It is the "in-between, the ambiguous, the composite," that which is situated at the border between the symbolic and that which the symbolic strives to repress. The liminality that characterizes the abject is, as Creed points out, precisely what constitutes monsters like the ghoul, the vampire, the zombie, the werewolf, the witch, and the robot. Such monsters are horrifying because they transgress established norms and

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[16]Ibid., 90.

[17]Julia Kristeva, The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982): 4

boundaries that divide among other things, living and dead, normal and supernatural, human and non-human.

Metropolis presents the drama of abjection by way of a very common expressionist motif: the doppleganger, which itself bears a long literary history filled with ghosts, statues, golem, homunculi, dolls, automatons, angels, and now cyborgs. The doppelganger, a manifestation of what Freud called the "uncanny," is a sub-species of the double, which refers to a self split or multiplied, as Maria is when the robot is created in her image. Joseph Francavilla writes,

> Often doubles which have split apart display contrast and are antithetical, yet they are similar in that they constitute halves or parts of a whole personality. Each half appears antithetical yet complementary, strange yet familiar, and antagonistic yet sympathetic...The psychic conflict of incompatible attitudes or irrepressible impulses forces part of the ego to become exteriorized, thrown outward, in order to allow the self to survive. Projected outward, this variety of double then represents the return of the repressed part of the personality torn apart by its irreconcilable elements."[18]

In the case of Metropolis, the doppelganger is used to express the classic opposition between Madonna and Whore. At a deeper or unconscious level however, the 'true' and the 'false' Maria taken together represent what Kristeva refers to as the "two-faced mother" who herself represents "the baleful power of women to bestow mortal life."[19]

Thus it becomes obvious that women, invariably associated with the most abject figure of all--the maternal body--have a special relationship to the abject, and therefore to otherwise sublimated categories of the monstrous and the grotesque. As Kristeva notes, masculine authority in our culture, as in many others, "confesses through its very

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[18]Joseph Francavilla, "The Android as Doppelganger," Retrofitting Blade Runner, Judith B. Kerman, ed. (Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991): 5-6.

[19]Kristeva, 158.

relentlessness against the other, the feminine, that it is threatened by an asymmetrical, irrational, wily, uncontrollable power...That other sex, the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed."[20]

Drawing from the anthropological work of Mary Douglas, Kristeva links abjection to cultural and religious taboos involving food and bodily waste--especially signs of sexual difference such as menstrual blood which evoke the female (reproductive) body.[21] The abject nature of sexual difference is affirmed in our culture, as in other cultures, by prohibitions and taboos surrounding menstruation as well as excrement, the latter being associated with the mother because of her role as the primary 'authority' in the 'semiotic mapping of the self's clean and proper body.' Kristeva attributes this pre-oedipal 'authority'--to be distinguished from the paternal legislation of the Symbolic--and the need to suppress it, to the "universal phenomenon" of the mother as abject, despite its assumption of "specific shapes and different codings according to the various 'symbolic systems'."[22]

In psychic terms, the abject is an ineliminable aspect of subjectivity, the origins of which according to Kristeva, are, like those of the semiotic, pre-oedipal and prior to language. The process of abjection then is a precondition of individuation and acculturation as the abject, grounded in the maternal body, must be disavowed and expelled in order for the subject to operate fully and securely in the Symbolic. A boundary entity, the maternal body eventually comes to epitomize abjection, the place "where meaning

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[20]Ibid., 70.

[21]Elizabeth Grosz, "The Body of Signification," Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva, John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 1990): 89.

[22]Kristeva, 69.

collapses."[23] Neither subject nor object, the abject signifies the undifferentiated threshold between both, recalling the infant's corporeal symbiosis with its primary 'object.' In her discussion of Celine's writing, whose aesthetic she identifies with abjection, Kristeva writes,

> When Celine locates the ultimate of abjection--and thus the supreme and sole interest of literature--in the birth-giving scene, he makes amply clear which fantasy is involved: something *horrible to see* at the doors of the invisible--the mother's body. The scene of scenes is here not the so-called primal scene but the one of giving birth, incest turned inside out, flayed identity. Giving birth: the height of bloodshed and life, scorching moment of hesitation (between inside and outside, ego and other, life and death), horror and beauty, sexuality and the blunt negation of the sexual.[24]

Because successful acculturation rests upon the abjection of the subject's maternal (natural/archaic) origins, and the submission to the patriarchal Symbolic which is governed by rules and laws, the fully acculturated body must either repress or "bear no trace of its debt to nature."[25] Henceforth, the maternal, the site/sight of primary repression, of both life and death, embodies that "which fascinates desire...[but] must be repelled for fear of self-annihilation."[26] The maternal body is ultimately both a painful reminder of the horror of separation and a focus of nostalgic desire--hence the yearning for originary plenitude. As Braidotti notes, psychoanalytic theory takes this logic of repulsion and attraction, fascination and horror, as "the fundamental structure of the mechanism of desire and, as such, of the constitution of the neurotic symptom: the spasm of the hysteric turns to nausea, displacing itself from its object."[27]

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[23]Ibid., 2.

[24]Ibid., 155.

[25]Ibid., 102.

[26]Creed, 10.

Unlike many other psychoanalytic concepts, abjection addresses corporeality and the role of the body in the constitution of the speaking subject. As Elizabeth Grosz writes, "[i]t is an insistence on the subject's necessary relation to death, to animality, and to materiality, being the subject's recognition and refusal of its corporeality."[28] While abjection may be crucial to symbolic actualization and the demarcation of the properly social body, the abject, which generally (and more literally) refers to tears, saliva, feces, urine, vomit, mucus, blood, pus, etc., hence the 'abjects' repeatedly absorbed and ingested, processed, and eventually expelled from the body by way of its gaps, apertures and 'erotogenic' zones, is also fundamental to the body's biological functioning. Moreover, abject 'objects' such as food, corporeal waste, and bodily fluids that remain vital to the body, while never fully externalized, are never completely eliminated either: they *are* the subject insofar as they constitute it as material, embodied, *speaking* entity. As Grosz has observed, this is precisely what makes Kristeva's perspective so novel. She writes,

> What is new about Kristeva's position is her claim that what must be expelled from the subject's corporeal functioning can never be fully obliterated but hovers at the border of the subject's identity, threatening apparent unities and stabilities with disruption and possible dissolution. Her point is that it is impossible to exclude threatening or anti-social elements with any finality.[29]

The state of abjection, "being as ill-being," is thus ultimately a recognition of our contingency, hence the precariousness of our body, its borders and the Symbolic itself.

Aside from addressing the embodied nature of psychic development, the concept of abjection enables greater understanding of the ambivalences underlying visual fascination, affect, physical sensation and the cinematic image, hence the connections between (visual)

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[27]Braidotti, 81.

[28]Ibid., 89.

[29]Grosz, 86.

signification and the body. The horror cinema, defined primarily by its excessive staging of the abject, is the privileged realm of perverse visual pleasure, for paradoxically, the pleasure of watching horror depends on how terrified and repulsed it renders the viewer. As Creed writes,

> Viewing the horror film signifies a desire not only for perverse pleasure (confronting sickening, horrific images/being filled with terror/ desire for the undifferentiated) but also a desire, once having been filled with perversity, taken pleasure in perversity, to throw up, throw out, eject the abject (from the safety of the spectator's seat).[30]

Reactions to the horror film, and one could argue to films generally, are most always visceral, pleasurable or not.[31] As a corrective to the metaphysics prescribed by Lacan's notion of "lack," Steven Shaviro describes cinematic experience in terms of abjection:

> [Film] brings me compulsively, convulsively face to face with Otherness that I can neither incorporate or expel. It stimulates and affects my own body, even as it abolishes the distances between my own and other bodies. Boundaries and outlines dissolve; representation gives way to violently affective, more-than-immediate, and nonconceptualizable contact. Cinema allows me and forces me to see what I cannot assimilate or grasp...It foregrounds the body, apart from the comforting representations that I use to keep it at a distance...This touch, this contact, is excessive: it threatens my very sense of self.[32]

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[30]Creed, 10.

[31]This contradicts the main tenets of "orthodox" psychoanalytic film theory which ground the cinematic image in "lack," scopophilic pleasure in fetishistic disavowal, and which generally posit the gaze as disembodied and masterful. As Steven Shaviro has argued, such concepts assume a disinterested intentionality on the part of the viewer, an ability to distance and separate ourselves from the 'objects' on the screen. Visual fascination, as Shaviro argues in The Cinematic Body, is the inability "to separate ourselves...to put things at the proper distance and turn them into objects...the distance between subject and object is at once abolished and rendered infinite" (46). He goes on to say, "[s]copophilia is then the opposite of mastery: it is rather a forced, ecstatic abjection before the image, much like the psychopath's fixation on the female cop's gun in Blue Steel" (48). See The Cinematic Body (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

The excess and abjection that characterize the technological-feminine, exemplified by the transgressive machine-vamp of Metropolis thus attest not only to the investment of the body in her representation but also to its 'spilling over' into the gaze of the masculine characters who behold her within the narrative, not to mention the gaze of the spectators watching the film. The technological-feminine as abject therefore also functions as a paradigm for the cinematic experience itself. While this experience is most certainly circumscribed by technology--that is, the technology of cinema, it is also embodied, predicated as it is on desire.

In the particular case of Metropolis, the consequences of this "embodied experience" prove hazardous to the male subject who is inexorably drawn toward the cinematic image--"where meaning collapses"--as exemplified by the men in the cabaret who become collectively transfixed by the dizzying sight of the machine-vamp making her 'debut.' Their gaze is represented by means of superimposition (Spiegeltechnik) as a fragmented montage of eyes, exposing their ambivalence and ultimate passivity upon being confronted by the machine-vamp performing a seductive, "polymorphously sensual"[33] strip-tease. Significantly, this complex scene, which as Matthew Biro has observed, is coded as both "Freder's dream and the metropolis's waking reality"[34] is interspersed with images of death, specifically the Seven Deadly Sins, indicating the abject intensity of Freder's anxiety, who has collapsed after witnessing his father and the false Maria/'mother Thing' (mistaken

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[32]Ibid., 260.

[33]Dadoun, 143.

[34]Matthew Biro, "The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture," New German Critique 62 (Spring-Summer 1994): 94.

for the 'real' Maria) in an embrace--a moment which recalls the primal scene.[35] Freder's nightmare is subsequently linked through cross-cutting with the actions that unfold in the cabaret. What is important to note is that Freder's anxiety and passivity which is inscribed through association in the gaze of the cabaret spectators, contrasts with the penetrating and controlling gaze of Rotwang who in a previous scene chases and eventually traps the 'real' Maria with the beam of his lantern in the catacombs, of Frederson who represents the panoptic gaze of the metropolis, and indeed the False Maria herself whose castrative gaze proves unbearable for the men in the cabaret as well as Freder (by association). Thus in this film, which emphasizes, like many other films of the Weimar era, both seeing and looking,[36] 'the gaze,' hence the film's structure of vision, is fundamentally unstable. Furthermore, that its oscillation between "active" and "passive" is not clearly circumscribed by the gendered binary split ("active/male and passive/female") initially proposed by Mulvey, further mitigates against the construction of stable gender identities.[37]

According to Stephen Neale,[38] aside from confusing the boundary between human and non-human, the category of the monstrous--especially in horror--is distinctly bound to constructions of sexual identity and difference. He suggests that the monster's heterogeneity, impurity and ambiguity provoke such ambivalent reactions, and indeed fear,

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[35]See Roger Dadoun's, "Metropolis: Mother-City---'Mittler'---Hitler," Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction. Constance Penley, Lynn Spigel and Janet Bergstrom, eds., (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

[36]Richard McCormick, "From Caligari to Dietrich: Sexual, Social, and Cinematic Discourses in Weimar Film," Signs 18.3 (Spring 1993): 640-669.

[37]Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Film Theory and Criticism, 4th ed. Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen and Leo Braudy, eds. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992): 746-757.

[38]Stephen Neale, Genre. British Film Institute, 1980.

because such qualities not only threaten the homogeneity and stability of human identity, but the related boundaries of human sexual identity as well. It is for this very reason that contemporary feminist theorists, particularly Donna Haraway, have adapted the cyborg (part human/part machine/part animal) metaphysic to feminist politics.[39] For Haraway, the technological body's artifice and hybridity, indeed its monstrosity, is empowering precisely because it threatens the authenticity of categories such as human, of "woman" and "difference," and in so doing, upsets regulated boundaries of human (sexual) identity. In this vein, Mary Russo has recently urged for a positive reading of the carnivalesque body as a "bold" feminine performance, arguing that "the figure of the female transgressor as public spectacle is still powerfully resonant, and the possibilities of redeploying this representation as a demystifying or utopian model have not been exhausted."[40]

The dual fear of technology and female sexuality, expressed in Metropolis through a complex economy of oppositions (i.e. nature/culture, masculine/feminine, good/evil, master/slave, human/machine, rationality/irrationality) finds its ultimate cathexis in the machine-vamp, whose body and the atmosphere it stirs up, take on an increasingly carnivalesque tone toward the end of the film. Following her explosive performance, the machine-vamp parades wildly through the streets with men from the cabaret. This parade which soon evolves into a raging mob made up of the workers and their wives carries, as Huyssen has suggested, distinct connotations of "raging femininity."[41]

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[39] See Donna Haraway, Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), especially "A Manifesto for Cyborgs."

[40]Mary Russo, The Grotesque Body: Risk, Excess, and Modernity (New York and London, Routledge, 1994): 61.

[41]Huyssen, 77.

For Mikhail Bakhtin, who has written one of the more noted studies on carnival, Rabelais and His World, the carnivalesque represents a "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it mark[s] the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions."[42] In its widest sense, carnival refers us to socio-geographical spaces such as the fair, the popular feast, the pageant, the comic show and to oral and written genres of parody and billingsgate; it is a world of "topsy-turvy, of heteroglot exuberance, of ceaseless overrunning and excess where all is mixed, hybrid, ritually degraded and defiled."[43] Central to the category of the carnivalesque is 'grotesque realism,' which represents the body as open, incomplete, protruding, excessive, decaying--in Kristeva's terminology, abject. It is associated with the lower (earthly) bodily regions: the genital organs, the belly, the buttocks, as opposed to the upper regions associated with the head ('spirit', reason). The grotesque body, exemplified for Bakhtin by the Kerch terraccotta figurines of senile pregnant hags, is the repressed underside of the Classical body of the Renaissance which is discrete and complete:

> ...the [classical] body was first of all a strictly completed product. Furthermore, it was isolated, alone, fenced off from all other bodies. All signs of its unfinished character, of its growth and proliferation were eliminated; its protuberances and offshoots were removed, its convexities...smoothed out, its apertures closed. The ever unfinished nature of the body was hidden, kept secret; conception, pregnancy, childbirth, death throes, were almost never shown. The age represented was as far removed from the mother's womb as from the grave...[44]

The carnivalized mass we witness in the final sequences of Metropolis, which emerges from the lower bodily stratum of the city, ruptures the phallic and homogenizing

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[42]Rabelais and His World, trans., Helene Iswolsky, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968): 10.

[43]Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986): 8.

[44]Bakhtin, 29.

rationality (rigidity) that the metropolis embodies. The opening long shots of the film displaying symmetric and towering skyscrapers, are, for example, a monument to urban rationality and progress, as are the throbbing (phallic-like) pistons and the many other machine parts and clocks displayed in close-up. The expressionist aesthetic also clearly imparts the dominance of order and mechanism the city embodies. Rhythm and symmetry are choreographed into the workers' movements, bringing out a highly visual analogy between worker and machine: witness for example the scene where the automaton-workers on their way to the control rooms enter the elevator in formation with their heads bowed. Once in the machine-house, the men literally become cogs in the wheel, their entire bodies inexorably geared to the movements of the complex machines.

Thus a definite association is drawn in the final sequences between the unruly and hybrid female body (the false Maria) and the unruly and hybrid masses which disrupt the order enshrined by the metropolis. Moreover, the ensuing flood carries distinctly sexual overtones, symbolizing the overflow of sexual energy that emanates from her. In Male Fantasies, Klaus Theweleit's extensive psychoanalytic study of German misogyny and fascist ideology in the *Freikorps*, the mass is identified as an "embodiment of a specific unconscious" which in its phobic (revolutionary) form is associated with all that is despised of femininity: fluidity, viscosity, hybridity, filth, blood, etc.[45] Thus the masses, equated with "devouring femininity,"[46] signify all that must be abjected by the (Classical) "body-machine" of the fascist male soldier:

> Two basic types of bodies exemplify the corporal metaphysics at the heart of fascist perception. On the one side there is the soft, fluid and ultimately liquid

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[45]Male Fantasies, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

[46]Ibid., 6.

> female body which is a quintessentially negative "Other" lurking inside the male body. It is the subversive source of pleasure or pain which must be expurgated or sealed off. On the other there is the hard, organized, phallic body devoid of all internal viscera which finds its apotheosis in the machine. This body-machine is the acknowledged "utopia" of the fascist warrior.[47]

And of course the mass, in its most monstrous and chaotic form evokes, like Bakhtin's image of the grotesque, the maternal body:

> The "animal" in the mass snaps its greedy jaws and stares poisonously, paralyzingly from a thousand eyes. It has a thousand legs, a thousand heads, it can generate a thousand degrees of heat. It can metamorphose into a single creature, many-limbed: millipede, rat, snake, dragon. And it is named with the same mythological names we have encountered as characterizations of the bestial terrors inhabiting what is known indiscriminately as the belly of erotic woman menstruating or "ruptured" in childbirth: the Hydra, the head of the Medusa, the Gorgon.[48]

The machine-vamp and the rioting mass thus share very similar qualities, especially in view of their cultural and historically-specific encoding. For like Frederson, who viewed the workers' "hidden organization" with terrified suspicion the fascist soldier male viewed the revolutionary mass with its "capacity for metamorphosis, multiformity, transformation from one state to another" as uncanny, especially when it was invisible, in retreat. The uncanniness of the mass in Metropolis is thus, like the machine-vamp, to be located in its double nature, remarkably executed by Lang's handling of the crowds. For while the mass is in the latter scenes teeming and amorphous, it is at the same time highly stylized and 'architecturalized' into geometric, symmetrically-aligned shapes, most prominently triangles and pyramids, which in each frame are striking for the distinctness of their outlines. Indeed the mechanical elements and symmetry conveyed in certain scenes (i.e. the Moloch scene discussed below) clearly prefigure later German films such as Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi-commissioned Triumph of the Will (1935).

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[47]"Foreward," Jessica Benjamin and Anson Rabinbach, ibid., xix.

[48]Theweleit, 5.

The notion of "devouring femininity" embodied by both the machine-vamp and the carnivalized mass, happens to be prefigured as Moloch in Freder's first vision in the underground machine-room. Although Moloch is masculine (he is an incarnation of patriarch and 'city-god' Melicertes) this figure suggests, with his massive devouring teeth and mouth which the workers are shown entering, a "vagina dentata." This is a most fitting image considering that the monstrosity of the machine as Moloch is later displaced onto the monstrous figure of woman. As Creed notes, the myth of the vagina-dentata, traditionally a symbol of woman as "the devil's gateway," denotes the abject and "duplicitous nature of woman, who promises paradise in order to ensnare her victims."[49] This symbolism which refers back to the archaic mother is of course relevant to the uncanny duplicity of Maria, a self split into two dialectically-opposed "types" of femininity.

While this futuristic, mechanized city, a testament to the supremacy of rationality and culture, is almost completely devoid of nature, except as "decorative sign,"[50] certain geographical spaces in the film, especially the "intra-uterine" setting of the ancient catacombs and Rotwang's laboratory, strongly evoke the natural and primordial realm of the abject female body.[51] The horror of these cavernous spaces is further enhanced in key scenes--for example, the scene in which Rotwang pursues Maria through the catacombs with his lantern--by stylistic variations of lighting such as the effects of shadow and stark

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[49]Creed, 106.

[50]Dadoun, 137.

[51]The imagery of the womb-like catacombs clearly prefigures science fiction-horror films like the Alien trilogy which, as we will see, is saturated with similar images (i.e. dark and confined spaces, long winding tunnels and corridors leading to inner chambers, images of birth, images of death, multiple representations of the primal scene, etc.).

contrasts between black and white. Such images, as Dadoun astutely observes, convey "pursuit, confinement and death."[52] These cavernous spaces are literally grotesque, or grotto-esque to be precise, referring to its etymological origins.[53] As Russo observes, the cave is "low, hidden, earthly, dark, material, immanent, visceral. As bodily metaphor, the grotesque cave tends to look like (and in the most gross metaphorical sense be identified with) the cavernous anatomical female body."[54]

Womb imagery conveyed by confined spaces and long, dark, narrow, winding passage-ways leading to a central room, house or cellar--often the place where the monster carries out her/his hideous crimes--is a familiar staple of the horror film. The horror associated with the womb, a "cave of abjection,"[55] lies in its 'uncanny' nature--uncanny being, according to Freud, "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" but which has become alienated "if only through the process of repression."[56] Freud's theory of the 'uncanny' (unheimlich) is thus most relevant to the question of origins--particularly the womb which is both the subject's literal place of origins as well as the site of the first experience of separation.

Kristeva's theory of abjection extends Freud's formulations of the uncanny to the notion of taboo, situating the abjection of the maternal body within the structuring mechanisms of religious ritual and atonement which establish and fortify foundations of

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[52]Dadoun, 146.

[53]Of course the fact that the grotto is actually an artificial, 'man-made' imitation of a cave is also relevant to the artificial, 'man-made' nature of the machine-vamp.

[54]Russo, 1.

[55]Ibid., 2.

[56]Creed, 54.

sexual difference and hierarchical social order. The uncanny, like the abject, threatens ego boundaries, the demarcations between "I" and other, subject and object. While the uncanny is commonly elaborated with reference to castration anxiety, the primary uncanny, "the known of old and long familiar," has more to do with the womb and the horror provoked by the generative powers of the female body. Following Creed, Freud's classification of the uncanny falls into three main categories:

> 1) those things which relate to the notion of the double: a cyborg; twin; doppelganger; a multiplied object; a ghost or spirit; an involuntary repetition of an act.
> 2) castration anxieties expressed as a fear of the female genitals or of dismembered limbs, a severed head or hand, loss of the eyes, fear of going blind.
> 3) a feeling associated with a familiar/unfamiliar place, losing one's way, womb phantasies, a haunted house.[57]

Each of these categories articulates the potential loss of clear and gendered subject boundaries. Moreover, all of these categories are pertinent to the abject status of the technological-feminine, as defined by Metropolis. As a monstrous double, the false Maria violates the integrity and singularity of self. Meanwhile, Rotwang is a living example of her uncanny, and indeed castrating, powers for he has lost one of his hands in the process of bringing her to life.

As a number of critics have observed, Rotwang's construction of a robot fulfills a desire to assume the maternal function, "a kind of womb envy on the part of the male."[58] Aside from the cavernous, uterine reaches of the catacombs, Rotwang's house, an aberrant, ancient structure which sits in the middle of the ultramodern city quite removed from industry and mass-production, contains a number of iconographic and thematic

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[57]Ibid., 53.

[58]Doane, 147. See also Huyssen and Dadoun.

associations with the maternal body. While his cellar opens directly onto the dark winding pathways of the catacombs underneath, his laboratory/birthing chamber, "a technological forest bristling with tubes swollen with black sap, with throbbing balloons, quivering levers, thermometers, measuring devices, and rotating coils"[59] is replete with signifiers such as electrical charges, glowing globes, ring-like shapes and circles that suggest both copulation and birth. But while the familiar trope of the mad scientist and his monstrous birth are certainly at work here, the burden of maternal femininity, specifically the representation of the robot as 'archaic mother,' rests, I would argue, with the two Marias--despite Rotwang's castrated, feminized (and potentially maternal) status. Nevertheless, his house, the site of Maria's conception and (re)birth, and the site of what Dadoun has described in great detail as the "great technological primal scene," is no less significant, and nor is the question of identity that this site of uncanniness and its associations with the abject womb throw into doubt. Of the symbolism of the house in the horror film Creed writes:

> Behind the quest for identity in these films lies the body of the mother represented through intra-uterine symbols and devices. Here the body/house is literally the body of horror, the place of the uncanny where desire is always marked by the shadowy presence of the mother.[60]

It is also interesting to note that the paradox of Rotwang's house, an archaic structure inscribed with signs of the ancient and esoteric (namely five-pointed stars) that simultaneously houses a futuristic science laboratory, neatly parallels the paradox embodied by Maria, a futuristic robot who houses an archaic maternal femininity.

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[59]Dadoun, 144.

[60]Creed, 55.

The "shadowy presence" of the archaic, also referred to as 'phallic,' mother refers us back, as I have noted, to the pre-oedipal moment when the relationship between mother and child is symbiotic and the mother is phantasized as powerful and omnipotent. The mother of the pre-symbolic is essentially dual in nature. While she is a procreative force, she also threatens to re-engulf that which she brings into the world. The archaic mother is thus constructed as abject in order to avert the subject's potential re-incorporation. By repudiating and abjecting the incorporative and 'phantasmatic power of the mother,' the constitution of properly symbolic subjectivity is ensured. Evidently, the archaic mother is a profoundly ambivalent figure; in film, especially science fiction and horror, this ambivalence is most often construed as monstrosity. But while the archaic mother signifies an abyss, a "place where meaning collapses" and subjectivity meets its death, she can also, as Creed argues, be interpreted in the tradition of the great mother-goddess, hence an originating womb, "that ancient archaic figure who gives birth to all living things."[61] Unfortunately, as Kristeva makes clear, mechanisms of abjection are deployed in many cultures in order to subordinate her maternal power "whether historical or phantasmatic, natural or reproductive" to symbolic law.[62] Nevertheless, the essential duplicity of the archaic mother as rendered in Metropolis by the division of Maria into 'good' and 'bad' mother, while monstrous, is also a potential site of transgression and empowerment.

Despite her putative technological status, I have argued that the false Maria, an abject figure, is closer to nature and to body than is the true Maria, an incarnation of the virgin Mary, who is 'clean and proper' and thus fully symbolic. But in fact, as her abject

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[61]Ibid., 24.

[62]Kristeva, 91.

'other,' the false Maria might be read as the "residue left untapped by [Maria's] symbolic functioning."[63] An unruly body that signifies and carries the weight of meaninglessness, the abject body of the machine-vamp cannot be fixed, and thus cannot be apprehended by an objectifying gaze. The true Maria on the other hand, remains for the most part 'petrified,' and therefore ironically more machine-like, in her essential purity.

The machine-vamp exposes in her metallic form an active and threatening phallic principle which causes Frederson to recoil in fear upon first seeing her; in her feminine form, she is sexually anarchic and spellbinding. In fact it would seem, in view of the cabaret scene and the famous montage of rotating eyes, that she has the power to turn the male voyeur to stone. As Dadoun points out,

> This montage of the mother-upon-phallus is a traditional but always impressive and fecund condensation, source of monsters from the Sphinx to the Gorgon: the False Maria is a monster of this type, a splendid mythological creation of the cinema, baby sister of the formidable King Kong and a woman who no doubt seduced and aroused her own creator, Lang himself...[64]

The Medusian iconography of the cabaret scene, namely the basin decorated with hydra-headed serpents out of which the false Maria emerges and the "serpentine interfusion"[65] created by her outstretched arms and veils as she dances indeed cannot be missed. According to Freud, the image of the Medusa's head with its hair of serpents symbolizes woman's castrated status and thus evokes the castration complex; thus her assumed castration being the very source of its horror. Conversely however, historians have

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[63]Grosz, 87.

[64]Dadoun, 143.

[65]Nina Auerbach, Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1982): 48.

interpreted the Medusa figure as a variation of the 'vagina dentata' and mother-goddess, thus emphasizing her castrat*ive* and devouring aspects.[66] In fact, Merlin Stone has argued, following archeologist Stephen Langdon, that the serpent-woman of Christian and classical mythology is not originally associated with the phallus but rather points to a much earlier female divinity. Describing Langdon's 1915 account she writes, "[h]e wrote that the Goddess known as Nina, another form of the name Ianna, perhaps an earlier one, was a serpent goddess in the most ancient Sumerian periods."[67] Aside from representing a multitude of imaginary phalluses, the vaginal symbolism of the Medusian snakes' open mouths and pointed fangs more clearly reinforces woman's castrative and subversive aspects, rather than her lack. In Metropolis, the phantasmatic and omniverous power of the vagina dentata/machine-Medusa over the men who look upon her is, as I have already suggested, symbolically pre-figured in the representation of the machine as Moloch: a cannibalistic monster who possesses a large and engulfing (vaginal) mouth.

Maria's archetypal incarnation as witch is relevant to all of the demonic and abject aspects of woman discussed thus far. Moreover, it confirms her affinity with the realm of nature and the body. Witches, traditionally defined as female, are historically known for their supernatural, generative powers, including the ability to heal and to create new forms of life. In many cultures, their magical and healing powers were directly connected to the female body, including biological functions such as menstruation and the ability to give birth. Even before witchcraft was deemed heresy in Europe by the Catholic Church, and prior to the publication of the Malleus Malificarum (1484), however, the practice of witchcraft took on negative connotations as the roles of women healers and midwives were forcefully usurped by a growing male medical profession. The practice of medicine,

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[66]Creed, 111.

[67]Qtd. in Auerbach, 94.

originally associated with the private realm of Nature (i.e. herbalism, folklore, intuition), moved into the public sphere of Culture as it was integrated with the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Moreover, when witchcraft was outlawed by the Catholic Church in the fourteenth century, what was previously considered innocent cunning, healing and mysticism became identified with devil worship and other evil acts. Henry Kramer and Jacob Sprenger's Malleus Maleficarum, an Inquisitor's manual for prosecuting witches used for roughly three centuries, explicitly designated women and witches as agents of the devil and male castration. Witches were thus not only accused of having orgies with Satan himself, but also for causing male impotence, and of stealing men's penises.[68] As Creed notes, film discourses dealing with the witch and its variations (i.e. the 'archaic mother,' the 'vagina-dentata') continue to emphasize her monstrosity and castrating powers. These are often expressed in terms of her essentially sexual nature and willful acts of evil and destruction; "her other social functions as healer and seer have largely been omitted from contemporary portrayals."[69]

The coding of the technological-feminine as witch in Metropolis is crucial to the relegation of the robot to the archaic sphere of nature, sexuality and the flesh. Conventionally represented as an enemy of the symbolic order, the witch sets out to wreak havoc on whole communities. The witch is thus a profoundly abject figure. Her loathsomeness, manifest in an unrelenting bodily immanence, represents everything the

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[68]Creed quotes the following excerpt from the Malleus Maleficarum which has to do with the theft of men's penises:

> And what, then, is to be thought of those witches who in this way sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a bird's nest, or shut them up in a box, where they move themselves like living members, and eat oats and corn, as has been seen by many and is a matter of common report? (75)

[69]Ibid., 76.

properly socialized subject must struggle to disavow. It is for this very reason that the machine-vamp's horror, attributed to the monstrousness of her femininity, emerges with such sublime force.

> Overloading the body of the witch with the weighty demands of the flesh, we would fix that pernicious body with its corrupt and stinking sexuality *over there, and thus distance ourselves from it and be rid of it.* But however much the witch is punished, tortured, and burned, she continues her haunting presence, and indeed, the more she is repressed the more insistent, horrible, and frightening she becomes.[70]

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[70]Robert D. Romanyshyn, Technology as Symptom and Dream, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989): 151.

CHAPTER TWO

"What's the Story, Mother?": Promising Monsters in Alien, Aliens and Alien³

> [W]e live in the set of a science-fiction horror movie. We exist, like our artifacts, in a state of suspended animation; our high technology is extraterrestrial technology, with deadly impacts upon us Earthlings...every technology is a reproductive technology.
>
> -Zoe Sophia

The Alien trilogy, comprising Ridley Scott's original Alien (1979), Aliens (James Cameron, 1986), and Alien³ (David Fincher, 1992) stands out for its ability to visualize and "speak" the unspeakable--or to put it slightly differently, to represent the unrepresentable. The unspeakable or unrepresentable is here condensed in the monstrous imago of the mother, whose ubiquitous presence is *spoken* in each scene of visceral horror. Admittedly, the maternal figure has been taken up extensively in analyses of these films,[1] however the progression of the Alien trilogy, and the way each film plays upon current preoccupations with technology, reproduction and motherhood merits further exploration. While the sequels have drawn extensively from the original story, they have, extending over a ten year period, each engaged divergent concerns while deploying distinct generic conventions, themes and images. Keeping these differences in mind, it is the project of this chapter to trace the series' progression to its synthetic culmination in Alien³. In this last film, which departs from the previous two in tone and, to some extent

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[1]See for example, Barbara Creed, The Monstrous-Feminism: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, especially pp. 16-30; Lynda Zwinger, "Blood Relations: Feminist Theory Meets the Uncanny Bug Mother," 74-90; Mary Ann Doane, "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine"; James H. Kavanaugh, "Feminism, Humanism, and Science in Alien"; Lynda K. Bundtzen, "Monstrous Mothers: Medusa, Grendel, and now Alien," Film Quarterly 40.3 (Spring 1987): 11-17.

premise, contemporary anxieties surrounding reproduction and technology become most pronounced as they are provocatively figured in a symbolic field of sexual epidemic and paranoia. The maternal threat is thus blatantly re-figured as viral threat, while the stakes in the battle against the alien are raised by the specter of AIDS she represents. As we will discover, the discourse of AIDS and the "panic logic" of contagion and sexual anxiety[2] it has generated are crucially relevant to the fin-de-siècle anxieties about gender, identity, and transgressive sexualities at the heart of these films. Moreover as Linda Singer points out, AIDS, like reproductive technology and changing paradigms of motherhood, has "prompted renewed concern about the production of life itself, about reproduction, fertility, the family, which are...seen as threatened by current conditions."[3]

The maternal body in the Alien series is, much like the female robot in Metropolis and, as we will see in the next chapter, Eve of Destruction, a "metaphor for the uncertainty of the future - the new, unknown, potentially creative and potentially destructive future."[4] In each film, Ridley Scott's original Alien especially, this metaphor is rendered most dramatically at the level of mise-en-scene. In its spectacular blending of mechanical and organic imagery and, more important, in its mapping of the unconscious horror of the reproductive body onto the "pristine and sexless rational spaces" that characterize most mainstream science fiction films from the 1960's to the present,[5] Scott's Alien and its sequels manage, in particular ways anticipated by Metropolis, to bridge the

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[2]See Linda Singer's Erotic Welfare: Sexual Theory and Politics in the Age of Epidemic, Judith Butler and Maureen MacGrogan, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).

[3]Linda Singer, "Bodies-Pleasures-Powers," Ibid., 114.

[4]Barbara Creed, "Postmodernism and the Science Fiction Horror Film," Alien Zone, 215.

[5]Scott Bukatman, Terminal Identity, 267. See also Vivian Sobchack's "The Virginity of Astronauts: Sex and the Science Fiction Film," Alien Zone, Annette Kuhn, ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1990): 103-115, for a discussion of these issues.

generic boundaries of horror and science fiction. In terms of the post-sixties science fiction film, "so brilliantly epitomized and parodied" by Kubrick's 1968 film 2001: A Space Odyssey, Scott Bukatman remarks that Alien "presents the return of the repressed--the body--to the *space* of the science fiction film."[6]

The Nostromo is, for instance, a model of lifeless, sexless rationality, however the womb imagery of the central chamber where the crew members are first shown sleeping inside their cryogenic egg-like pods, as well as the ship's long and narrow winding corridors and small enclosed spaces initially seen in long tracking shot, strongly evoke the maternal body. Moreover, the ship's umbilical lifeline is a computer called "Mother" (MU/TH/UR/ 6000) who ironically, as we discover later, colludes with the evil Company in what amounts to the murder of the crew, her 'children.' The alien spacecraft, which contains a massive egg chamber with extruding intestinal walls and two large vaginal portals, also animates the anatomy of the maternal, but does so in a far more visceral and grotesque way than the Nostromo; as Scott Bukatman observes, this vessel is "a masterpiece of organic machinery--a technological space that is also a body."[7] Indeed its Gothic design resembles the morphology of the alien itself, a border-crossing, shape-shifting creature of alterity that is both inorganic and organic, masculine and feminine; a composite of fetishized phallus and castrating "vagina dentata."[8] As the carnage and fear escalate during the alien encounter, the ship's "intra-uterine" spaces become increasingly corporeal. As Paul Virilio suggests in reference to Aliens, the visual effect is endoscopic,

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[6]Ibid., 262. Bukatman's emphasis.

[7]Ibid., 266.

[8]Creed, 16-30.

like "a medical visit into visceral gloom, into the evil incarnate of the celestial object."[9] This endoscopic effect is further reinforced by the crew's use of remote tracking devices (and in Aliens, by the sophisticated video monitors used by the marines, especially as they first encroach upon the aliens in the basement of the space station). One could say in fact that the entire film functions as an endoscopy, an interiorizing, high-tech gaze into the mother's body--her giant womb suspended in the void of deep space.[10] But what is the significance of this technologically-mediated return to the imaginary body of the mother, which in these films is, as Doane observes, "not only the subject of representation, but also its ground"?[11]

The maternal body of the Alien films is experienced on a very intimate level; it is impossible to maintain it at a safe distance. Like Metropolis's machine-vamp, the maternal body is here constructed, albeit in far more graphic ways, as abject, as the pre-oedipal or archaic "parthenogenic mother, the mother as primordial abyss."[12] As discussed in Chapter One, this mother threatens to incorporate the subject into the place where, in the

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[9]Paul Virilio's observation is made in reference to Aliens, however it works, I believe, with all the films. See Virilio's, "Aliens," 446.

[10]This journey is also central to Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey, however in 2001, the womb is very much *disembodied* and the mother conspicuously effaced in favour of the astral fetus/'Star Child.' As a number of feminist critics have pointed out, such fetishistic representations of autonomous, free-floating fetuses have usefully served as political fuel for the Pro-Life movement's ongoing "cult of fetal personhood." See Zoe Sophia's "Exterminating Fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-Semiotics of Extraterrestrialism." See also Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Feotal Images: the Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction," Carol A. Stabile, "Shooting the Mother: Fetal Photography and the Politics of Disappearance," and Valerie Hartouni, "Containing Women: Reproductive Discourse in the 1980's."

[11]Doane, "Technophilia," 169.

[12]Creed, 17.

words of Kristeva, "meaning collapses, the place of death."[13] The alien with her/his/its razor-sharp jaws and phallic shape is the most visible and insidious manifestation of (and fetish-object for) the archaic mother who, phantasmatically merged with the mise-en-scene, is experienced as a constant menace. Each film of the trilogy in fact presents, at an imaginary level, a gradual re-incorporation into the body of the mother. Inside this body the characters are forced to negotiate an unfamiliar (uncanny), non-Symbolic space characterized by the "in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" without "borders, positions, rules."[14] In Alien (and to some extent Aliens) this re-incorporation follows an abrupt oedipal separation, a dissolution of the "blissful union with the mother," as the crew emerges from hypersleep to unexpectedly find itself in an unknown solar system--a space of terrifying alterity, as their encounter with the alien will certainly affirm.[15]

Of course the spectator is also implicated in this ill-fated separation/regression. As Creed argues, unlike the conventional narrative film which typically ensures pleasure in looking, the aim of the horror film is to horrify by confronting the viewer with terrifying and abject images. In fact the horror film often suspends spectatorial identification, which traditional psychoanalytic film theory following Christian Metz aligns with an active and sadistic gaze[16], by encouraging the spectator to 'not-look' or by punishing the spectator

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[13]Creed, The Monstrous-Feminine, 17, 29.

[14]Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982): 4

[15]Torry, 349.

[16]As Metz writes, "It is true of all desire that it depends on the infinite pursuit of its absent object, voyeuristic desire, along with certain forms of sadism, is the only desire whose principle of distance symbolically and spatially evokes this fundamental rent" (743). "The Imaginary Signifier," Film Theory and Criticism, Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy, eds. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992): 730-745.

who is compelled to look, hence transforming pleasure in looking into pain.[17] Inferring from Creed then, the spectatorial pleasure (voyeurism) of the cinematic horror text is aligned with masochistic (un)pleasure, as the act of looking, otherwise made safe and enjoyable through specular identification, is met with the abject, thus the unbearable image of the archaic (m)other who happens to be so prominent in the Alien films.

Given this, one could argue that the horror film, and the Alien films in particular, are grounded in what Gilles Deleuze has defined as a "masochistic aesthetic," the formal structures of which extend beyond the realm of clinical "perversion" and into the "arena of artistic form, language, and production of pleasure through a text."[18] Importantly, Deleuze distinguishes masochism from the oedipal structures of sadism. Drawing upon Deleuze's formulation, while moving beyond the basic tenets of castration, sexual difference, and female lack underpinning current film theory, Gaylin Studlar proposes that cinematic pleasure itself is more unstable, that it is circumscribed by primal, pre-oedipal fears and fantasies associated with the mother, the "active nurturer, first source of love and object of desire, first environment and agent of control" who "assumes all symbolic functions."[19] As Carol Clover puts it: "[T]he pleasure of looking at others in fear and pain has its origins in one's own past-but-not-finished fear and pain."[20] Studlar notes that masochistic desire, and consequently cinematic pleasure, are informed by a great deal of ambivalence, because "the promise of blissful reincorporation into the mother's body and re-fusion of the child's narcissistic ego with the mother as ideal ego is also a threat."

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[17]Creed, Monstrous-Feminine, 28-30.

[18]Gaylin Studlar, "Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of the Cinema," 604.

[19]Ibid., 609.

[20]Men, Women and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992): 230.

Moreover, "only death can hold the final mystical solution to the expiation of the father and symbiotic reunion with the idealized maternal rule."[21] This is clearly dramatized in the Alien films where the imaginary regression and re-incorporation into the mother's body, the object of nostalgic (masochistic) desire, entails a loss of subjective boundaries (literally in view of the alien attacks) precipitating death.[22] It should perhaps be noted that Studlar's "prime case study" of the masochistic aesthetic is found not in horror but rather in the oeuvre of Josef Von Sternberg, particularly the Von Sternberg/Marlene Dietrich collaboration. Thus while Von Sternberg's films, which Studlar observes for their "multiple layers of paradox, fascinating ambiguity of emotion, and almost transcendental visual beauty,"[23] do share with the horror genre their visual excess as well as a certain sublimity, the ambivalent and 'perverse pleasures' of watching them should nevertheless be distinguished from the much more abject and ambivalent pleasures of watching the horror film. I note this not to dispute Studlar's claims, but rather to point out that horror, in view of its narrative content and formal qualities, functions in much more overt and literal ways to stimulate, while violating the ontological/bodily boundaries of, the (viewing) subject. By the same token, as Steven Shaviro argues, horror is "crucial to any account of cinematic experience," precisely because "in the realm of visual fascination, sex and violence have much more intense and disturbing an impact than they do in literature or any other medium; they affect the viewer in a shockingly direct way."[24]

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[21]Ibid., 609.

[22]Kristeva writes in Powers of Horror, "There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the *want* on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded" (5).

[23]Ibid., 608.

[24]The Cinematic Body, 55.

The way in which Kane meets his demise in Alien becomes somewhat paradigmatic in this respect. In the space (diegetic and unconscious) of the Nostromo, a maternal space without "borders, positions, and rules," science fiction's "ultimate technological fantasy, creation without the mother," becomes a grotesque parody of male reproduction as Kane gives birth to the alien. Indeed, this is the same alien which in an earlier scene, as if to punish him for *looking* while in the derelict spaceship, darts out, breaks through the faceplate of his helmet and implants itself inside him by means of oral rape.[25] As Robert Torry notes, "the significance of this event derives from the extent to which the film has prepared us for its metaphoric implications,"[26] namely the contrast and eventually fatal confusion between the technological, rational and hermetically-enclosed space of the Nostromo and the primordial alien threat that ruptures and infects this space from without. This is, at a metonymic (and metaphorical) level, dramatically rendered in the momentary mirroring of Kane, his head encased by his egg-like helmet, and the alien embryo, similarly encased inside its translucent egg membrane. The horror elicited by the ensuing "birth" scene (of course from Kane's point-of-view it is a death scene), an exceptionally gory display of Kane's truly alien-ating evisceration (which happens to be preceded by his own dream of smothering), is enhanced by its categorical reversals. For one brief moment, the traces of which stubbornly linger, Kane is a grim spectacle of nondifferentiation: a blurred mess of male/female, as well as human/alien/animal, inside/outside, self/other, living/dead.

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[25]The implications of Kane's act of looking which result not only in his death but also in his *feminization* (which in itself proves deadly), provide a rather interesting illustration of the gender ambiguity and fluidity at stake in recent accounts of masochistic cinematic pleasure, including those of Studlar, Clover, and Shapiro, all of which attempt to move beyond binaristic models of cinematic experience and spectatorship.

[26]Robert Torry, "Awakening to the Other: Feminism and the Ego-Ideal in Alien," Women's Studies 23 (1994): 345.

It is important to note in this context the associations between the alien and Ash, the ship's sinister science-officer and undercover android. Ash is an equally uncanny and grotesque creature, as demonstrated in his horrible and intriguing "death" scene when he spurts and oozes white milky fluid from his mangled, decapitated body. Like the alien, Ash, a combination of human and technological, defies stable categorization.[27] The alien's oral rape of Kane also prefigures the scene in which Ash squares off against Ripley, attempting to kill her by shoving a rolled up pornographic magazine down her throat. Moreover, it is Ash who has let the alien onto the ship, not out of compassion for Kane--indeed, his 'humanism' is feigned in every respect--but under orders from the Company who wants the specimen, as Ripley later surmises, for its "weapons division." In fact Ash and, as we discover, "Mother" the ship's computer, are both in league against the humans who have already been decreed under the Company's directives ("Special Order 937") as "expendable." As one critic has noted, the alien, described by Ash with reverence in his final moments as "unclouded by conscience, remorse or delusions of purity," is the ruthless "biological analogue" of the Company who, without conscience or remorse, has orchestrated this mission from the beginning in the interests of commercial, and presumably political, gain.[28] Science fiction's trope of technology run-amok becomes horror's trope of biology run-amok, albeit both remain firmly within the Company's sphere of power.

This profoundly dystopic scenario represents an extreme manifestation and indeed, an intergalactic, post-cold war extension of late capitalist 'bio-power'. As one critic

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[27]One of Freud's primary examples of the uncanny is the difficulty in distinguishing mechanical from organic.

[28]Jeff Gould, "Symposium on Alien," Science Fiction Studies 7 (1980): 283.

observes, "at this extreme end of science lies the abyss: the Alien."[29] According to Foucault, bio-power is consolidated around two poles: the disciplines of the body which construct the body as machine and the regulation of the human species, the life of the body, as such. Bio-power thus reflects the consolidation of power over the body beyond the juridical, as the body moves into "knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of intervention", hence placing man's "existence as a living being into question."[30] As Foucault argued, the linking of these two poles, hence the formalization of bio-power with the emergence of the biomedical and social sciences in the nineteenth century, was indispensable to the rise of capitalism, for it "would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population and economic processes."[31] Within the microworld of the Nostromo, power is not repressive as such; rather the mechanisms of knowledge/power, hence the regimes of bio-power, here figured prominently as science in the service of corporate enterprise (the Company), have produced ultimately expendable, but no less multifunctional, disciplined human and/or machine subjects (Ash) deployed "for wage labor, sex, reproduction, mothering, spectacle, exercise, or even invisibility, as the situation demands."[32] While the infrastructure of this microworld remains hierarchical and fundamentally power-bound, its channels of regulation are for the most part asymmetrical, anonymous, and gender-neutral. Moreover, they coexist with the crew members' activities

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[29]Tony Stafford, ibid., 297.

[30]Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction (New York: Vintage Books): 142-3.

[31]Ibid., 141.

[32]Singer, 57.

of individuation and/or resistance, some of whom are purely driven by the desire for economic gain (Brett, Parker), while some, like Ripley, are concerned primarily for the safety of the crew.

In Aliens, the connections between the operations of bio-power, corporate interest, and technology--particularly reproductive technology--become more explicit. However in Cameron's film, depthless cynicism, or what Jameson has described as the "waning of affect,"[33] is exchanged for all-American military bravado and recuperative sentimentalism. This time the Company, represented by the sleazy and mercenary Carter Burke, and the aliens (its "biological analogues") are responsible for the deaths of "sixty or seventy *families*," as Ripley, reprising her role as hero, whispers in shock early in the film. But Ripley's heroism is given a new twist, for it is now fortified by a maternal instinct awakened by a little girl named Newt, the sole survivor of the colonist families.[34] This 'instinct,' hence Ripley's unrelenting determination to protect her adopted child, makes her a match for even the 'Mother of all Aliens.' At the same time, the ontological concerns raised in Alien and anxieties stemming from technological and psychosexual 'alienation,'[35] figured at a number of levels by the alien itself, are pacified for we are presented with an alternative to the grotesque mother in Ripley, who is fetishized in this film as the ideal

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[33]Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Postmodernism: A Reader, Thomas Docherty, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 62-97.

[34]This maternal instinct is in fact also present in Alien in relation to Jonesy the cat. Although it renders her a more humanitarian, and some have argued, *humanist* figure, it is not thematized in the same way, or to quite the same extent, as it is in Aliens.

[35]Anxieties stemming from technology are pacified in Aliens by technology itself, for this film is profoundly nostalgic as well as technolophilic. As I will discuss in the next chapter, both nostalgia and technophilia operate, especially in the context of cinema, on similar plains.

sacrificial mother. Interestingly, her romanticized maternal strength is also played out (and wins out) against the masculinized strength of Private Vasquez, "stylized Chicana lesbian grunt,"[36] who embodies another host of gender ambiguities and transgressions.

In Aliens the maternal is clearly more than a trope of horror. Cameron's film which combines generic elements of the action film and war epic appeals more directly to cultural (particularly the New Right's) concerns inspired by the fragmentation of maternal identity and the state of "family values" besieged by "teenage sex, nonmarital sex, nonreproductive sex, hedonism, careerism, women's work force participation, the denigration of "traditional" gender identities, the dissolution of the nuclear family."[37] In other words, Aliens deals in a rather overt way with the psychosexual anxiety and confusion aroused in Alien which, however subtly, presented its hero as a woman and unapologetically impregnated a man. Cameron's strategy thus involves capitalizing on the cultural fears glimpsed obliquely in Alien, and felt more intensely in the 1980's, by multiplying them in scale and number. He then alleviates such fears through the reassertion of good ol' American "family values." Recalling Hudson's sarcastic comment in reference to Vasquez--"Somebody said 'aliens'--she thought they said illegal 'aliens' and signed up"--we might say that one type of family, represented by the evil aliens, is pitted against another (the good, traditional, white, nuclear type), righteously defended by the American soldiers.[38]

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[36]Lynda Zwinger, "Blood Relations," 84.

[37]Hartouni, 33.

[38]As Amy Taubin argues with respect to the "historically specific political meaning" of the final confrontation between Ripley and the Mother Alien, "If Ripley is the prototypical, upper-middle-class WASP, the alien queen bears a suspicious resemblance to a favorite scapegoat of the Reagan/Bush era--the black welfare mother, that parasite of the economy whose uncurbed reproductive drive reduced hard-working taxpayers to bankruptcy," "Invading Bodies: Alien[3] and the Trilogy," Sight and Sound 2.3 (1992): 9.

Thus read symptomatically, the proliferation of the aliens and the ensuing war waged against them by the American military becomes a perfect allegory for the cultural anxieties described above, having assumed crisis proportions. Incidentally, the aliens are not only excessively plural in this film (hence the title), but are more diverse and "biologically perfect" in form and adaptive capabilities, as well as mammoth enough to justify the most sophisticated military hardware available. In this respect then the military coding of the film serves to emphasize, as well as define, the kind of threat they pose. As Linda Singer suggests,

> The rhetoric of social action in our age, be it medical, political, or theoretical, is largely dominated by militaristic metaphors of combat, enemies, positions, support, and defense. Such metaphors work to produce a set of expectations about the dynamics or forms such struggles assume, as well as suggesting strategies of response and modes of resolution. In this culture, we tend to wage war on our social problems...[39]

In this context Aliens' Ripley is indeed a very compelling figure. While each film has Ripley transformed into a soldier who takes on a commanding role otherwise reserved for men, it is in Aliens that this role is most reluctantly and, subsequently, most enthusiastically, assumed as she "does the Rambo thing and saves [a little girl named Newt] single-handedly from the evil Alien."[40] But before touting Ripley as a feminist icon, we should note that her "Rambo masquerade," as Linda Zwinger rightly argues, "is performed *for the sake of her child*, not to gratify any illicit desires of her own (she's not, that is, moved by Freud's big gun, penis envy)."[41] In other words, Ripley's heroic, masculine strength and her deftness with technology are not profoundly subversive, rather, they serve to reestablish a particular (patriarchal) order that has been threatened, while

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[39]Singer, 71.

[40]Zwinger, 82.

[41]Ibid., 84. Zwinger's emphasis.

reaffirming the sentimental and romantic image of motherhood that she ultimately embodies.

As will also be discussed in the next chapter, the emergence of new and more widely available reproductive technologies is one important element that directly plays into postmodern anxieties concerning the changing role of mothers. Motherhood can no longer be relied upon as categorically natural and moreover, it has become less dependent on the traditional nuclear family. "Strategically designed for maximum flexibility in its capabilities for deployment," new fertility technologies have, returning to Foucault's notion of biopower, intervened in reproduction and restructured it, in the process making (female) bodies "more malleable and responsive to fluctuations in demographic utilities."[42] Some fifty-seven years after Ripley's last confrontation with the alien, the family has been declared "expendable." Writes Haraway, "Ideologies of sexual reproduction can no longer easily call upon the notions of unproblematic sex and sex role as organic aspects in 'healthy' natural objects like organisms and families."[43]

In one scene, Ripley and the marines discover the station laboratory which is lined with a number of huge glass cases containing embryonic aliens, some "in stasis." Inferring from the lab reports, they learn that the scientists have been performing experiments on the colonists in an attempt to successfully extract/abort implanted embryos from their bodies. As Bishop deduces from one of the reports, not one patient has survived the procedure. In view of the anxieties alluded to earlier, this scene evokes images of a future where the development of artificial wombs has been realized, indeed the possibility that, in the words of Lyotard, "in fifteen years it will not be necessary for women to bear their

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[42]Ibid., 124.

[43]Haraway, "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Constitutions of Self in Immune Systems Discourse," Simians, Cyborgs and Women (New York: Routledge, 1991): 212.

children: the whole period of gestation could take place in vitro."[44] Rosi Braidotti similarly notes: "The possibility of mechanizing the maternal function is by now well within our reach; the manipulation of life through different combinations of genetic engineering has allowed for the creation of new artificial monsters in the high-tech labs of our biochemists."[45] The fears and nightmarish repercussions of prospective advances in reproductive technology as well as likely innovations in cloning and embryo transfer technologies called up by this scene also graphically presage the final horrifying encounter with the parthenogenic Mother Alien, who in her birth chamber resembles a massive 'mother-machine' as she churns out one monstrous embryo after another.

It should be observed that in Cameron's film the alien, overwhelmingly multiple, is also more explicitly female, and so incites a greater degree of male anxiety and paranoia. The creature in the lab for instance which violently darts out at Burke, is a graphic display of female genitalia, even though it also has a penis-like appendage. Hicks' flip comment, "Looks like love at first sight to me" seems to confirm its feminine nature. The openings of the eggs which lie waiting for human hosts are equally vaginal, as are the crab-like creatures with long phallic tails that come out of them. In their developed form the aliens each have two sets of vaginal, razor-sharp jaws.[46] And just as in Alien, the female body *is* the mise-en-scene; here it is a "womb-tomb" hostile to the marines' masculine presence.

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[44]Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Response to Kenneth Frampton," Postmodernism: ICA Documents, Lisa Appignanesi, ed. (London: Free Association Books, 1989): 92.

[45]Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects, 78.

[46]Granted at each stage of their development, the aliens are by 'our' standards intersexual which adds a great deal to their alien and grotesque natures; however, despite any 'masculine' or androgynous features they might possess, they are, given their reproductive capabilities and their excessive fluidity, strongly coded as feminine.

As Lynda Bundtzen remarks noting the film's sexual imagery, "[t]he band of marines who enter her vagina, then her womb (which is also a catacomb cluttered with bony human refuse), with all their fire power and ejaculatory short bursts of guns, are ineffectual and insignificant male gametes."[47] But it is the Mother Alien's awesome fecundity witnessed by Ripley and Newt in her birth chamber that evokes the most horror. It is also in this scene, which soon evolves into their notorious final stand-off, that the association between Ripley and the Mother Alien is sealed. What were once two "irreconcilable motherhoods," embodied in the alien and Ripley respectively--"one primitive (organic) and annihilating, the other modern (technological) and absent, one excessively prolific, the other sterile"[48]--have come full circle. Ripley's final realization of motherhood is dramatically accomplished through technology--the loader in which she encases herself to do battle with Mother Alien to save her child--but it only serves to return her to and stabilize her within the fetishized maternal body--purged of its slimier and more unbearably abject qualities of course, once the alien is again blown out of the airlock. There is even a suggestion of a family at the end, a post-apocalyptic nuclear family comprised of Ripley, Hicks, Newt and Bishop (standing in for Jonesy the cat).

> [The AIDS epidemic] has lost its discreteness and specificity and become a condition, no longer an object of knowledge, but a contemporary epistemic condition of articulation. Hence, the effects of epidemic are to be found throughout contemporary discourses on bodies, pleasures, sexualities, sexual arrangements, forms of erotic exchange, the production and marketing of zones of erotic safety, the juridical construction of bodies in relation to the state, the rightful relations among family members, the delimitation of what is a family under the law.[49]

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[47]Bundtzen, "Monstrous Mothers," 14.

[48]Celeste Olalquiaga, Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Sensibilities (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press): 31.

In Alien[3] issues of reproduction and the association between Ripley and the alien are brought more sharply into relief, while the anxieties that were invoked in the previous films in relation to them are located within the sphere of sexual epidemic. 'Upping the ante,' Fincher's film finds Ripley on Fury 161, a planet at the "rat's ass end of space" which is also a maximum security prison for male rapists and murderers. One could say this is the last chapter in Foucault's history of "punitive reason"--indeed, the prisoners are here of their own volition.[50] The film's particularly gloomy setting, which blends medieval and post-apocalyptic, and significantly (in terms of Foucault), prison/hospital iconography, clearly marks Ripley as 'alien'--the only female among a "motley crew" of men hostile to her presence. The men are hostile primarily because they have all taken a vow of celibacy and Ripley has audaciously disrupted the "harmony." The men in fact pose more of a threat to Ripley than the alien itself (as we later find out because she is gestating its offspring); in one scene she is nearly gang-raped.

But her status as woman is provocatively figured as contagion too; she is prohibited from "fraternizing" with the other prisoners, is confined to an infirmary and placed under strict quarantine, and it is she who has (inadvertently) brought the alien(s) to Fury 161. In short, Ripley now rivals the alien as a profound source of dis-ease. The alien's sexual nature, significantly more masculine-looking this film; the setting of the prison--a place which houses all kinds of "risk groups" (i.e. IV drug users, gay men, people of colour--in Superintendent Andrews' words, "scum"); the visual prominence of the hypodermic needle, i.e. the "cocktails" administered to Ripley by Dr. Clemens; the initial pretense of a possible cholera outbreak; the prisoners' millenarian Christian

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[49]Judith Butler, "Editor's Introduction," Erotic Welfare, 11.

[50]Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, (New York: Random House, 1977).

fundamentalism and vows of celibacy; and Ripley herself with her shaven head and androgynous, infirm appearance, are among the powerful metaphors of sexual-political AIDS discourse mobilized in this film. And of course one cannot ignore the flood of bodily fluids which, arguably, are what demarcate these films as horror as opposed to 'pure' science fiction.

Bodily fluids are thus crucially important in this context. Their association with AIDS in Alien[3] only serves to reinforce, in a larger sense, the association between contagion and femininity that runs through all three films. This association reflects, as Elizabeth Grosz suggests, "an order that renders female sexuality and corporeality marginal, indeterminate, and viscous [and] constitutes the sticky and the viscous with their disgusting, horrifying connotations."[51] Alluding to Irigaray, Grosz notes that the horror of bodily fluids has much to do with their "cultural unrepresentability," and hence the unrepresentability of femininity, maternity and all things subordinate to the "self-identical, the one, the unified, the solid."[52] Ironically it is also women, in their "inherent capacity for contagion," who have been targeted in heterosexual communities as the "guardians of sexual purity" and therefore as guardians, in terms of contraceptive practices and procedures, of both male and female sexual fluids.[53]

The sexual nature of Ripley's relationship with Clemens, the prison doctor, is highly suggestive and adds volumes of significance to Ripley's ensuing pregnancy/infection. The meanings of AIDS, sexuality and reproduction embodied in the

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[51]Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994): 195.

[52]Ibid., 195.

[53]Ibid., 197.

alien, and now Ripley, thus coalesce in this film to become what Paula Treichler has described, referring to AIDS, as an "epidemic of signification."[54] In one crucial scene Clemens and Ripley are in the infirmary, where earlier they have had sex. After describing his past to her, his morphine addiction, his responsibility while high for the deaths of a number of patients to whom he prescribed the wrong dosage of painkiller,[55] he asks her, with sexual connotations and references to AIDS abounding, "Do you still trust me with a needle?" While their previous sexual interactions have seemed rather perfunctory, occurring mostly off-screen, these ensuing moments, indeed this entire sequence, contain a great deal of erotic charge. Already united by the intermingling of sexual bodily fluids Ripley coyly offers Clemens her arm as if to suggest that it is alright that they share needles too. This tightly framed shot is followed by an extreme close-up of the needle puncturing her skin, which then cuts away to an image of the alien looming behind Clemens ready to strike. After the alien makes a bloody mess of Clemens, he/she/it approaches Ripley. In what is a highly potent image, Ripley and the alien, with her/his/its double jaws exposed and dripping with blood, are then shot together in side view. The relationship between Ripley and the alien is sealed once more, this time firmly within the parameters of sexual transgression and disease. As Creed remarks, this shot of Ripley and the alien strongly suggests "both death and desire."[56] Again, the associations with AIDS are not to be missed here.

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[54]See Treichler, "AIDS, Homophobia, and Biomedical Discourse: an Epidemic of Signification," October 43 (1987): 31-70.

[55]The character Clemens calls up a number of related fears, namely, the possibility of infected doctors and dentists passing the disease on to their patients, the dangers of blood transfusions, of a "tainted" blood supply, and the general risk of "innocent" people contracting the infection.

[56]Creed, Monstrous-Feminine, 52.

Soon Ripley finds out that she herself has been impregnated by the alien (or was it Clemens who planted the 'demon seed'?); her nightmares--one is shown at the beginning of Aliens--have become reality; or perhaps this entire film is simply her nightmare.[57] Ripley who had become robotic in her last confrontation with the alien, here becomes thoroughly cyborg according to Haraway's formulation of the term; her body defined by "breached," or "leaky" boundaries between animal-machine-human, a body "wary of holism but needy for connection."[58] Haraway also emphasizes the positive aspects of new research into the human immune system which envisions the human body as a "network-body of amazing complexity and specificity."[59] As she suggests, one consequence of such research is "learning to visualize the heterogeneous, artifactual body that is our 'social nature,' instead of narrowing our vision that 'saving nature' and repelling alien invaders from an unspoiled organic eden called the autonomous self."[60] I would not want to trivialize or indeed romanticize the diseased body and horrible fatal immunological breakdowns such as those precipitated by HIV and AIDS. However, Haraway's proposition that today's immunological discourses, pervasive in both scientific and non-scientific cultural realms, are instrumental in the construction and maintenance of "the boundaries for what may

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[57]As Amy Taubin remarks, "There is evidence to suggest that Alien^3 is, in its entirety, Ripley's nightmare...a nightmare from which she never awakes. This is not merely to say that Alien^3 traffics in the fantastic; as sci-fi it obviously does. Rather, that the structure of this $50 million mega-sequel often seems like a secondary elaboration (in the Freudian dream work sense), a jagged and digressive cover to the anxiety churning beneath," "Invading Bodies," 9.

[58]Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 151.

[59]Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," Cultural Studies, Larry Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1991): 323.

[60]Ibid., 324.

count as self and other in the crucial realms of the normal and pathological"[61] is an important and useful one, as is her related observation that they "are particularly potent mediators of the experiences of sickness and death for industrial and post-industrial people."[62] While immune systems discourse locates the body within a contingent field of language, information and coded systems of recognition and mis-recognition, so disrupting rationalistic definitions of self based on biological holism, the body still remains subject to hierarchized, and indeed gendered and racialized, oppositions between self and non-self (other). It is thus equally subject to the "semantics of defense and invasion"[63] embedded in biopolitical discourses of late twentieth century Western culture--especially those surrounding AIDS. In this respect, and I will return to this below, Ripley's shedding of her robotic skin--hence the kind of self figured in some immunoligical discourses as a "Robotic Battle Manager meeting the enemy (not-self)"[64]--in favor of fluid boundaries and "illicit fusions" with that which is radically non-self, takes on a more hopeful significance.

As for the alien itself, although it is certainly not technological, in fact it seems to overflow with all that is lowly and organic, it is nevertheless, through its association with the Company, "enframed" by a technological logic that, in a continual effort to surpass nature, is "developing more and more within frameworks of biological determinism" and adaptability.[65] The science of "artificial life," which is devoted to the creation of lifelike

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[61]"Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Constitutions of Self in Immune System Discourse," Simians, Cyborgs and Women, 204.

[62]Ibid., 208.

[63]Ibid., 224.

[64]Ibid., 215.

[65]Timothy Druckrey, "Introduction," Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology, Gretchen Bender and Timothy Druckrey, eds. (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994): 4.

organisms, some 'species' of which are able to move, eat, reproduce and die, is an important example of this. As Steven Levy writes: "Just as medical scientists have managed to tinker with life's mechanisms in vitro, the biologists and computer scientists of [artificial]-life hope to create life *in silico*".[66] From this perspective, Ash's earlier described admiration of the alien begins to make sense, for he is aware in his 'dying' moments that this silicon-based life form "unclouded by conscience and delusions of morality" is, on a bio-mechanistic continuum, infinitely more adaptable, and therefore far superior, than even he is. The importance of technology and the meeting between technology and the body should therefore not be underestimated here. Up until this point the alien has signified the dirty and irrational underside of the rational, monadic self and its technological products. In the words of Sophia, "for every *shiny good* product there's a *slimy bad* by-product..."[67] The macrocosmic struggle has been thus far to keep the two (self/alien to self, 'shiny good'/'slimy bad', normative/pathological) separate--to eject, or rather, *ab*ject the alien and all its uncanny, polluting properties out of the airlock. This struggle is implicit at a metafilmic level as well with the scopophilic/technophilic pleasures of science fiction viewing interrupted and unapologetically 'tainted' by the cruel conventions of the horror film. As alluded to earlier, this has a number of implications for the viewing subject. For in this situation, the 'spilling over' of horror, the primary sign of which is the abject body of the alien (not to mention her/his/its victims), into the pristine and otherwise sterile technological spaces of postmodern science fiction, circumscribes spectatorial pleasure with profound ambivalence, an ambivalence which ultimately entails a

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[66]Steven Levy, Artificial Life: A Report from the Frontier Where Computers meet Biology (New York: Vintage Books, 1992): 5.

[67]Zoe Sofia, "Exterminating Fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-Semiotics of Extraterrestrialism," Diacritics (Summer 1984): 48.

passive submission to, rather than an active and purely rational mastery of, the object.[68] Considering this, we might recall the notion of the technological-feminine, the ground of which, as established, is the phantasmatic maternal body--the perpetual 'ghost in the machine.'

Returning to Ripley as cyborg subject, Allison Fraiberg points out, "[t]he cyborg notion of transgressed boundaries and leaky distinctions finds its immunological referent in the discourses of AIDS."[69] Ripley's status as cyborg/AIDS body is further reinforced by her status as expectant mother--a borderline state if there ever was one. Her pregnancy is captured on the neuroscanner as "foreign tissue," which constitutes, in the context of AIDS, and the Alien films generally, an incorporation of non-self as radical pathology. In terms appropriate to the 'artifactual' body, it constitutes a communication malfunction.[70] Hence the maternal body, the AIDS body, and the alien body, all directly imbricate to constitute Ripley as cyborg.

But is cyborgian/alien identity in Alien^3 given to utopian possibility, the "promises of monsters," as Haraway's mythology would have it? Or does it mean inevitable death? Diegetically it certainly brings death for Ripley as her assumption of cyborgian/alien

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[68]See Studlar, 611-613.

[69]Allison Fraiberg, "Of AIDS, Cyborgs, and other Indiscretions: Resurfacing the Body in the Postmodern" [computer file]. Postmodern Culture. Electronic journal 1.3 (May 1991).

[70]Haraway's remarks are especially relevant here, "The special ambiguity of female individuality-perhaps more resistant, finally, than worms to full liberal personhood-extends into accounts of immune function during pregnancy. The old biomedical question has been, *why does the mother not reject the little invader within as foreign*? After all, the embryo and fetus are quite well marked as 'other' by all the ordinary immunological criteria; and there is intimate contact between fetal and maternal tissue at the site of certain cells of the placenta, called trophoblasts..." "Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies," 253n.8. emphasis mine.

identity involves her own self-annihilation--or put another way, the performance of the ultimate sacrifice--despite the scientist Bishop's ironic assurances that she could still "have a life," and have children. The allusions to religious figures like Christ, or perhaps more appropriately Joan of Arc, as she falls arms outstretched into the fire are glaringly obvious, and certainly acquire even more significance in the age of AIDS. At the same time however, this act, as Taubin suggests, guarantees certain freedom and reassures Ripley's survival as *myth*.[71] The importance of myth here is not to be derived in the ideal, transcendental or fixed sense (surely a danger when discussing monsters, mothers and saints), but rather in the sense of an empowering and always contingent political *fiction*, in the ironic mode advocated by Haraway. As she asserts:

> Feminist humanity must, somehow, both resist representation, resist literal figuration, and still erupt in powerful new tropes, new figures of speech, new turns of historical possibility. For this process, at the inflection point of crisis, where all the tropes turn again, we need ecstatic speakers.[72]

Ripley's simultaneous figuration as monster/mother and leap over the brink reconfigures freedom in a more limited or embodied sense as a point of exit or evasion--more literally, a "line of flight," as proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.[73] Mary Russo might describe Ripley's final performance as "stunting," a tactical risk taken "in a situation in which strategy is not possible."[74] As she suggests, "the tactic,...the practice of

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[71]Taubin, 10.

[72]Haraway, "Ecce Homo, Ain't (Ar'n't) I a Woman, and Innapropriate/d Others: The Human in a Post-Humanist Landscape," Feminists Theorize the Political, Judith Butler and Joan Scott, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1992): 86.

[73]Russo, The Female Grotesque, 50.

[74]Ibid., 22.

stunting, belongs to the improvisational, to the realm of what is possible at the moment."[75] Russo's own privileging of the "aerial sublime" in this context has obvious significance with respect to Ripley's final flight. While her flight might suggest, as Russo points out, "that there is only one way out [for the entity marked "Woman]: death, whatever its representation--hysterical breakdown, unconsciousness, loss of visibility, or more literally loss of life,"[76] this is a risk that Ripley assumes quite possibly because for her, the alternative (returning to Earth and the Company, having children--whatever the case may be) is a far greater risk with equally fatal or worse consequences. Perhaps most importantly though, her metaphorical leap points to an image of freedom not conceived in modernist terms as "limitless space, transcendence, newness, upward mobility...,"[77] but rather a kind of freedom thoroughly mitigated by gravity--and grave realities. This is best captured in the film's final image as Ripley, risking what few would, falls into the flames, embracing the alien that has burst from her own stomach lest it escape once more.

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[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid., 44.

[77]Ibid., 50.

CHAPTER THREE

Technology, Nostalgia and the Fetishized Maternal Body: Eve of Destruction

> In the late twentieth century, this continuing narrative of the embattled and calculating mortal individual elaborates the fantasy of the breakdown of already fantastic "coherent" subjects and objects, including the Western self, for both men and women. All subjects and objects seem nothing but strategic assemblages, proximate means to some ultimate, theoretic end achieved by replicating, copying and simulating--in short, by the means of postmodern reproduction. No wonder cloning is the imaginary figure for the survival of self-identity in cyborg culture.
>
> -Donna Haraway, "Investment Strategies for the Evolving Portfolio of Primate Females"

> [I]t is in [the] gap between resemblance and identity that nostalgic desire arises. The nostalgic is enamored of distance, not of the referent itself. Nostalgia cannot be sustained without loss. For the nostalgic to reach his or her goal of closing the gap between resemblance and identity, lived experience would have to take place, an erasure of the gap between sign and signified, an experience which would cancel out the desire that is nostalgia's reason for existence.
>
> -Susan Stewart, On Longing

Today's popular technological discourses restage the modern drama of "embattled" identity with a heightened sense that in the age of (post-)mechanical reproduction, the human and its technological "second self" are no longer mutually exclusive. In a cultural moment variously defined within the rubric of the postmodern, it would seem that technologies of communication and simulation promise to 'literalize' poststructuralist theorizations of subjectivity as social-symbolic construction. This resonates with N. Katherine Hayles' characterization of postmodernism as a denaturing process, hence "the realization that what has always been thought of as essential, unvarying components of

human experience are not natural facts of life but social constructions"[1] "To denature something" as she says, "is to deprive it of its natural qualities."[2]

The denaturing of subjectivity, a common theme in the contemporary science fiction cinema, finds quintessential expression in films which feature artificial humans in the form of robots, androids or cyborgs (Westworld, Futureworld, Android, The Terminator, Terminator II, Blade Runner, Weird Science, Robocop, Robocop II, Cherry 2000, Eve of Destruction, Cyborg, Universal Soldier, etc.). The biotechnological cyborg (*cyber*netic *org*anism), described by feminist and 'cyborg theorist' Donna Haraway as a "strategic assemblage of heterogeneous biotic components,"[3] embodies the fundamental implications of denaturalization in postmodern culture, hence the evolution of a human body defined by hybridity and fragmentation, with great capacity for social, simulated and material (re)constructability--in Haraway's words, "strategic" reassembly. Alluding to this postmodern subject Hayles writes:

> When the essential components of human experience are denatured, they are not merely revealed as constructions. The human subject who stands as the putative source of experience is also deconstructed and then reconstructed in ways that fundamentally alter what it means to be human. The postmodern anticipates and implies the posthuman.[4]

Margaret Morse suggests that "the actual status of the cyborg is murky as to whether it is a metaphor, a dreamlike fantasy, and/or a literal being."[5] I would argue however that the

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[1]N. Katherine Hayles, Chaos Bound, 255-66.

[2]Ibid., 266.

[3]Donna Haraway, "Investment Strategies for the Evolving Portfolio of Primate Females," 146.

[4]Hayles, 266.

cyborg is always and already a metaphor--a fiction--whether "literal" or not; for the cyborg collapses and renders meaningless the distinctions between "metaphor," "dreamlike fantasy," and "literal being," by fictionalizing what counts as "literal being" in the first place. As Haraway puts it, "The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience...the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion."[6] This caveat aside, metaphors and fictional representations of posthuman or cyborgian subjectivity in the cinema must nevertheless be distinguished from the analytic category of the cyborg advocated by Haraway. In "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," which is perhaps her most influential piece, Haraway provocatively advocates for cyborgian identity as a feminist political project. While Haraway's cyborg is, at its most utopian, genderless, the cinematic cyborg is not.

Representations of technology in film tend to be very much invested with concerns of the body, and in turn, its transformation under the aegis of rapidly modernizing technologies. In the context of popular cinema, such concerns inevitably bear the mark of gender as they become implicated in the narrative and imaginary structures of sexual difference that continue to circulate widely in Hollywood discourse.[7] This is certainly true

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[5]Margaret Morse, "What do Cyborgs Eat? Oral Logic in an Information Society," Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology, Gretchen Bender and Timothy Druckrey, eds. (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994): 158.

[6]Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. (New York: Routledge, 1991): 149.

[7]The centrality of gender and sexual difference to the structures of pleasure, identification, and ideology in the classical cinema was of course initially elucidated by Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Many of Mulvey's ideas have since been debated and continue to be reassessed, especially with respect to the conundrum of the gaze and the female spectator. However, the significance of gender to the cinema's mechanisms of pleasure and unpleasure that she addressed, while perhaps not reducible to her arguments, remains no less important. While much has changed since the studio era,

of the cyborg film where the conjunction of technology and the body, a conjunction which dramatically throws the 'nature' of subjectivity into question, serves to heighten the preoccupation with sexual identity and embodiment--the very categories which 'real world' technologies of representation (i.e. biotechnologies in the realm of reproduction, genetic engineering, surgical augmentation, etc.) threaten to alter and redefine. In other words, while technology might be shown to diminish the 'humanity' of a given individual, it does not follow that gender is likewise diminished. Considering films ranging from Westworld, Android, Blade Runner, Weird Science, The Stepford Wives, Cherry 2000 to Eve of Destruction, the technological female body continues to function in the tradition of Metropolis either as a sexual object of masculine technofetishism or a monstrous embodiment of man's scientific hubris. By the same token, male cyborgs featured in films like The Terminator, Robocop, Universal Soldier, Total Recall, etc., typically fortify their masculinity with muscular armor and aggressive, hypermasculine force.[8] While the cyborg film's preoccupation with gender and sexuality is a function of the popular cinema itself, particularly in meeting the narrative requirements of the mainstream Hollywood film (which most cyborg films indeed are), the representation of the contemporary cyborg subject can nevertheless be interpreted as postclassical, as can the question of gender it brings into play. And if, as Janet Bergstrom has argued, the value of sexual difference as

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Hollywood films still tend to uphold a strong sense of sexual difference between male and female characters. Even in the science fiction cinema where, as Constance Penley has noted, "it is becoming increasingly difficult to *tell the difference*" (her emphasis), the principle of sexual difference, albeit heavily coded, is maintained by displacement. She writes: "In these films the question of sexual difference--a question whose answer is no longer "self-evident"--is displaced onto the more remarkable difference between human and the other." See "Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia," Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema. Annette Kuhn, ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1990):123.

[8]See Claudia Springer's "Muscular Circuitry;" Hal Foster, "Armor Fou," OCTOBER 56 (1991): 64-97; and Scott Bukatman's Terminal Identity, especially pp. 301-311.

postclassical lies in its unpredictability,[9] then we might ask what possibilities--negative or liberatory--are opened up by the intersection of technology with categories such as "gender," "self-identity," "nature," and "history."

Eve of Destruction (Duncan Gibbons, 1991), the subject of this chapter, is among recent films concerned with technology and the changing 'nature' of sexual identity, however it is the maternal body, mirrored in the monstrous figure of the female cyborg, that bridges these categories. As in Metropolis and the Alien trilogy, the maternal body in Eve of Destruction is, in various ways, visually and phantasmatically configured as archaic and terrifying, the repressed underside of patriarchal rationality. But in the context of changing gender roles, and an economy of high-tech, military and corporate corruption--the latest regime of what Foucault calls 'bio-power,' the maternal body is also the focus of nostalgic desire. Thus while extrapolating a dystopic technological future, Eve of Destruction simultaneously articulates a romantic longing for an ideal past, hence for the recontainment of the 'natural' and 'good' mother inside the fetishized female body. In the film this longing invokes the technological-organic (m)other, a figure who emerges out of the conjunction of naturalized femininity and the technological/synthetic body. This is, however, a deeply problematic conjunction that, as Mary Ann Doane observes, alluding to the female robot of Villiers de L'Isle Adam's Future Eve, exists "in a relation that is a curious imbrication of dependence and antagonism."[10] After all, the cyborg Eve 8, like Future Eve's Hadaly, is a machine and as such, is unable to reproduce. Thus despite being

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[9]Bergstrom, "Androids and Androgyny," Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction, Constance Penley, Lynn Spigel and Janet Bergstrom, eds. (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 35-6.

[10]Mary Ann Doane, "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine," Body/Politics, Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1990): 166.

feminine, she "blocks the very possibility of a future through her sterility,"[11] not to mention the possibility of history, of origins--the fact that she is a walking time-bomb with a nuclear device in place of a uterus serves, if anything, to reinforce this. By the same token, as Doane points out, motherhood itself "acts as a limit to the conceptualization of femininity as a scientific construction of mechanical and electric parts."[12] And yet in Eve of Destruction it is precisely the mother who "infuses the machine with the breath of human spirit." Hence Eve 8 is given 'life' by Eve Simmons, both as scientist *and* mother.[13] Moreover, unlike other narratives in which female cyborgs are created in the first place by male scientists, Eve's cyborg is created by her, without male agency.

As Doane suggests, technology--especially reproductive technologies--"threaten to put into crisis the very possibility of origins, the Oedipal dilemma, and the relation between subjectivity and knowledge that it supports."[14] It is thus perhaps not surprising that many science fiction films, particularly the cyborg narrative, and especially those which feature women as cyborgs, should also enact a symbolic return to the mother's body. In Blade Runner for example,[15] the ability to discern replicant from human hinges

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[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid. This of course applies to Metropolis as well, recalling the way in which Maria was used to construct the machine-vamp. An explicit reference is made to Metropolis in the science fiction comedy Android (1982) when the sexual energy of a human female is used to bring a beautiful female robot (constructed by a 'mad scientist') to life.

[14]Ibid., 169.

[15]While Blade Runner features both female and male replicants, the film does, considering that, unlike the male characters all of the important female characters are replicant, both interrogate and articulate femininity, as Kaja Silverman points out, through the figure of the android. As she argues of the film, "whereas 'replicant' does not signify 'woman,' 'woman' does largely signify replicant. Although the novel on which Blade Runner is based contains an important female character who is also human, Scott's film does not.

on the question of origins and by extension, the maternal, which is nostalgically invoked in the photographs collected by the replicants. The opening scene which shows Leon, a replicant, questioned about his mother in order to determine whether or not he is human, and more notably, his response "My mother? I'll tell you about my mother..." proceeded by his gunning down of the examiner, captures the conundrum at the heart of the film, an epistemological conundrum which is the essence of the replicant: history. In Blade Runner it is precisely the mother who provides the imaginary (and impossible) link between history and its traces which are reproduced in and by the photograph. Writes Giuliana Bruno,

> As a document of 'that-has-been', photography constitutes a document of history, of its deferred existence. A history conceived as hysterical is established only in an act of exclusion, in a look that separates subject and object. History is that time when my mother was alive before me. It is the trace of the dream of unity, of its impossibility. The all-nourishing mother is there, yet as that which has been given up. The Imaginary exists as a loss.[16]

Conflicts and anxieties about motherhood and reproduction at work in films like Blade Runner and Eve of Destruction attest to the growing unintelligibility and unrecoverability of such categories as we head into the twenty-first century.[17] While such anxieties,

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The only three women who have a narratively significant part to play, and who are available to the spectator for identification, are androids. Rachel, moreover, is not only prototypically human, but prototypically female." "Back to the Future," Camera Obscura 27 (1991): 115.

[16]Giuliana Bruno, "Ramble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner," Alien Zone, Annette Kuhn, ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1990): 191.

[17]It is also interesting to note that these films, particularly Eve of Destruction and the Terminator films also arrive amidst a recent "boom of baby boom movies" and a marked preoccupation with themes pertaining to parenthood, fathers, mothers, and reproduction. This is discussed at length by E. Ann Kaplan in Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); see especially 180-219. See also Tania Modleski, "Three Men and Baby M," Feminism

especially as they are expressed in Eve of Destruction, may reflect greater concerns with the decline of the family, traditional structures of sexual difference in the wake of feminism and the transition into postmodernity, they can also be read in the context of an expanding and industrializing field of reproductive technology, especially given that as Sophia, and the figure of the cyborg itself, remind us, "every technology is a reproductive technology."[18]

> In the current situation, the body is a technological object. An object of technical operations the number and scope of which will increase in the years ahead. Think of bio-medicine, bio-engineering, all imaginable prostheses, genetic surgery. Ten days ago I was involved in a discussion with a bio-medic who was saying...that in 15 years it will not be necessary for women to bear their children: the whole period of gestation could take place in vitro.[19]

These words, spoken by Jean-Francois Lyotard in 1985 at an ICA conference devoted to the question of postmodernism, tap into the anxiety that is rooted in the current relationship between technologies of reproduction, the body as "technological object," and changing constructions of the maternal. As Haraway observes, "the languages and issues of reproductive politics have intensified in material and symbolic power...Reproduction has become the prime strategic question, a privileged trope for logics of investment and expansion in late capitalism, and the site of discourse about the limits and promises of the

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Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age (New York and London: Routledge, 1991): 76-90.

[18]Zoe Sophia, "Exterminating Fetuses: Abortion, Disarmament, and the Sexo-Semiotics of Extraterrestrialism," Diacritics (Summer 1984): 48. She adds, "To the list of technologies we commonly think of as reproductive, like abortion, birth control, and other more exotic techniques like gene-splicing and -editing, cloning, etc., we add artifacts like radioactive wastes and toxic poisons which also directly intervene in life chemistry and embryology" (48).

[19]Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Response to Kenneth Frampton," Postmodernism: ICA Documents, ed. Lisa Appignanesi (London: Free Association Books, 1989), 30.

self as individual."[20] Issues concerning reproduction and reproductive politics are especially relevant to Eve of Destruction a film which, though it has not yet enjoyed the popularity or cult status of the films discussed thus far, is interesting if anything because of its inability, from a femininst perspective, to sustain a coherent or unified reading. For if this film traffics in a mixture of postmodern malaise and age-old misogynist themes--the title being our first clue--so too does it reverse and complicate such themes by incorporating a feminist narrative in which retribution is openly sought against the perpetrators of paternal and patriarchal abuse.

The unhappy situation of postmodernity is thus narrated on one level as a crisis of the maternal, which, due to changing ideologies, gender roles, and the advances of science and technology, hovers uneasily between its historically prescribed role in creation and, in a nuclear future, possible destruction. Motherhood, in other words, is depicted by the film as having fallen sway to what Haraway describes as a "breakdown of ideologies and images of female domesticity and of the intensification of reproductive politics and cultural meanings in postmodern worlds."[21] E. Ann Kaplan has described this breakdown in terms of a "mother-paradigm shift" consistent with the cultural logic of postmodernism and the transition from the machine age to the electronic age. With the subsequent collapse of boundaries between natural and unnatural, real and simulated, the maternal no longer guarantees epistemological certainty, history, identity and the real in any fundamental or subjective way. Writes Kaplan:

> It is this "given" that recent developments have irrevocably called into question. One of the characteristics of the postmodern moment is the proliferation of subject positions that historical individuals occupy. Whereas in earlier periods, looking

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[20]Haraway, "Investment Strategies," 143.

[21]Ibid., 145.

> now from the semiotic perspective, the sound-image "woman" was congruent with "mother"...things are now more complex.[22]

The crisis of the maternal is represented in the heavily symbolic doubling of the film's protagonist Eve, a late twentieth-century incarnation of the biblical archetype, who has become by the fateful 'eve' of apocalyptic destruction, both mother and cyborg. Along a complex trajectory, with the female cyborg providing its ultimate cathexis, the film links reproductive, cybernetic, and nuclear technologies by their shared impetus toward the radical de(con)struction of human embodiment and gendered subjectivity. Dr. Eve Simmons is the scientist in charge of engineering Eve 8, a cyborg whose body, whose sexual organs in fact, house a nuclear bomb. The cyborg is, significantly, not only modeled in Dr. Simmons' exact likeness but it is also programmed with her memories, thoughts and feelings.

While on a test-run, Eve 8 malfunctions and breaks ranks with her scientist creators, fueled by the repressed memories and desires of Dr. Eve Simmons. After buying herself a black mini-skirt and red leather jacket, she promptly embarks on a sexual rampage that involves seducing and killing, but mostly killing, men. The cyborg becomes most dangerous, however, when the nuclear device that has been implanted inside her is activated, causing her to go into twenty-four hour "battlefield mode." In order to avert a disaster of global proportions, Eve Simmons must assist Colonel Jim McQuade, a military officer called away from an important "hostage situation" to stop Eve 8, by revealing to him her memories, her angry thoughts, and secret sexual fantasies. A populist hero, dedicated to upholding the American status-quo, McQuade's hostility toward Dr. Simmons is closely tied to his distrust of machines, a distrust which is rather ironic given his involvement with the American government, one of the most powerful techno-political systems in the world. Nevertheless, he summarizes his personal philosophy for Eve

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[22]Kaplan, 182.

Simmons as follows: "I believe in a strong defense, I also believe we should show a little more backbone when dealing with the evils of this world; international terrorism being the prime one--also, automated tellers, junk mail and cars that talk back to you."[23] Later his contempt for technologists such as Eve Simmons as well as the machines she creates, is revealed in a climactic outburst whereupon he directly recapitulates the dangers of technology in terms of an archetypal feminine eve(vil):

> "You people are too much. I mean you really do think you're God. Except Doctor when God created his Eve, he did it to shake us up a little bit. Now you've gone one better and designed one to blow us all the fuck away!"

McQuade's sexism aside, the film remains ideologically ambiguous. Claudia Springer has noted that Eve of Destruction can be read as feminist revenge fantasy because the cyborg specifically targets for "destruction" those guilty of patriarchal abuse.[24] Taking two prominent examples, Eve 8 viciously bites (off) a man's penis after he calls her "bitch," and kills Bill Simmons, Eve's own father, a violent man who abused Eve as a child and was also responsible for the death of her mother. At the same time however, the film's concerns, condensed in the body of the cyborg, reiterate familiar patriarchal anxieties and fetishistic fantasies about the creative and destructive powers of women, mothers, and unrepressed female desire (machinic drive?). One could of course argue that the film's ambiguous representation of Eve Simmons and the cyborg is managed, to some extent, through its recuperative ending, or closure, a mechanism which applies to many

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[23]It should be noted that McQuade is black. In this context, the stereotypical, racist association of blackness and ethnicity with the primitive realm of 'nature' serves to corroborate McQuade's distrust of machines, thereby also intensifying the antagonism between him and Eve Simmons (while preventing, even while gesturing towards, the development of a sexual relationship between protagonists of the opposite sex that audiences more or less expect from such films).

[24]Springer, "Muscular Circuitry," 98.

commercial mainstream films, notably the genre film.[25] Thus the evil and vengeful cyborg is killed, patriarchal order is restored, and humanity is 'saved.' But so could one argue that the film's 'closure' is ultimately superficial. If anything it is unmitigating considering the nature and degree of destruction wrought by the cyborg. As Claudia Springer argues, "the recuperative closure cannot entirely dispel the film's forceful representation of an angry female figure successfully taking on the forces of patriarchal oppression."[26]

Returning to the film then, the lines of opposition between male and female, technological creation and biological creation, are confused by Dr. Eve Simmons who not only engages in the Promethean sin of artificial creation, but refuses her proper maternal role in biological reproduction. Going even one step further, she engineers a humanoid nuclear weapon, who, by virtue of living out her own unconscious desires, poses a direct threat to all human and biological life. Furthermore, her creation of Eve 8 represents an asexual, parthenogenic cloning of herself, thus reinforcing the idea of male passivity in the reproductive process by granting herself the certainty of personal and genetic continuity

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[25]As a function of the classical Hollywood system, the genre film, as Stephen Neale has argued, "allow[s] for (regulated) forms of excess, and (regulated) forms of display of its process: part of the very function of genres is precisely to display a variety of possibilities of the semiotic processes of mainstream cinema while containing them simultaneously as a genre...," Genre, (British Film Institute, 1980): 31. As for the question of closure, Thomas Sobchack puts it in more rigid terms: "...the form of a genre film will display a profound respect for Aristotelian dramatic values. There is always a definite sense of beginning, middle and end, of closure, and of a frame. The film begins with 'Once upon a time...' and ends only after all the strings have been neatly tied, all major conflicts resolved. It is a closed world. There is little room in the genre film for ambiguity anywhere---in characters, plots, or iconography. But even when ambiguities arise in the course of a film, they must be either deemphasized or taken care of by the end of the film." "Genre Film: A Classical Experience," Film Genre Reader, Barry Keith Grant, ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986): 105-6. What I am suggesting, by contrast, is that despite being framed by conventions such as closure, Eve of Destruction is not itself 'closed,' and nor are its ambiguities 'neatly' resolved.

[26]Springer, "Muscular Circuitry," 98.

that men are more or less denied.[27] In this scenario, where "cyborg replication is uncoupled from organic reproduction," the male role is rendered absolutely "inessential."[28] This is proven by Eve's own self-replication, but is further reinforced by the ensuing actions of her subversive cyborg other (daughter? sister?). Haraway writes:

> The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism...But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential.[29]

While the film conceives of all this in apocalyptic terms, Eve Simmons is compelling on a feminist level precisely because her technological self-(re)production comes at the expense of the "linear narrative of conventional, biological reproduction."[30] Such is the narrative that, as Doane indicates, "constructs maternal and the paternal as stable positions."[31] However one cannot discount the fact that Eve Simmons and her cyborg are presented in conventionally patriarchal terms; while one is fetishized as mother, the other is fetishized as a sexual object. But if the film's representation of machines and women is inherently problematic, it is also useful in illustrating a drawback of Haraway's "Manifesto" which largely neglects, through its outright condemnation of, the issue of nostalgia--hence our

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[27]It is worth noting that concepts such as parthenogenesis and ectogenesis figure within a long literary and theoretical feminist tradition of imagining alternative, more liberating modes of reproduction. Examples of such works range from Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland (1915), Joanna Russ's The Female Man (1975), Woman on the Edge of Time (1975), Shulamith Firestone's The Dialectic of Sex (1970) to Haraway's Simians, Cyborgs and Women (1989).

[28]Haraway, "Manifesto," 150.

[29]Ibid., 151.

[30]Cynthia Fuchs, "'Death is Irrelevant': Cyborgs, Reproduction, and the Future of Male Hysteria." Genders 18 (Winter 1993): 115.

[31]Doane, 175.

persistent desires, however ill-conceived and politically dangerous, for access to the 'real world,' to the 'natural,' to 'history'--regardless of how contingent or 'unfounded' such categories may be. As Judith Genova argues, "Most are put off by the thought of evolving into a monster; half machine/half human. After centuries of conditioning, humans hanker for the natural, the organic, the myth of oneness and wholeness, and fear the artificial, the concocted."[32] While the implications of these epistemological questions bear considering, suffice it to say for the purposes of this discussion that such desires are perpetually reflected in the cinema and therefore, as I have been arguing, have particular relevance to its representation of cyborgs.

Turning again to Eve of Destruction, the weaving of nostalgia and sexual difference along the axis of the maternal is set up very early in the film when Eve Simmons' son Timmy, referring to an illustration of a nude man and woman, points out, "This is a man. This is a woman. This is a vagina." And then to his mother's surprise, "These are tits...These are balls." In this scene, her son's improper vocabulary is, by implication, attributed to her improper parenting as her attention and interests seem to lie more in her laptop computer than in her son who she has ostensibly reserved time for. Their apparently brief time spent together is further cut short because she is called away for work. At a much deeper level however, her son's comments underscore the issue of sexual difference and its phantasmatic projection onto a world in which technologies of reproduction--(post)mechanical, biotechnological, and cybernetic--threaten to, again in the words of Doane, "disrupt given symbolic systems that construct the maternal and the paternal as stable positions."[33] Eve 8 of course figures at the heart of such a projection, as

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[32]Judith Genova, "Tiptree and Haraway: The Reinvention of Nature," Cultural Critique (Spring 1994): 22.

[33]Ibid., 175.

both a product of frightening new technologies of reproduction and as a signifier of their potentially frightening consequences. Thus at one end of the continuum she is an affront to the sanctity of human life, of nature; a machine all too human, as McQuade repeatedly puts it, "without a fuckin' off-switch." And although she is not exactly a clone, but rather a grafting of human and machine, she certainly, by virtue of being modeled after her scientist-creator-mother, calls up the related notion of copying, regenerating or replicating. As such she represents, like the replicants of Blade Runner, the logic of postmodern reproduction, namely *simulation*, and the impetus to efface the real, the self, history. Thus as Donna Haraway has provocatively theorized, the cyborg stands at the very pinnacle of what technologies of reproduction promise to bring in the as yet unrealized, but fast approaching, era of the posthuman; as she remarks, "cyborgs have more to do with regeneration and are suspicious of the reproductive matrix and of most birthing."[34]

Despite vast proportions of technological colonization, however, sexual politics have by no means disappeared. While gender has certainly become less of an organic category, it is still largely reproduced based on what are assumed to be 'natural' sexual differences.

> ...sexual difference may no longer be the figure of distinct, hierarchically arrayed, and stably complementary man and woman; but representations of male and female bodies remain ready to figure the strategic calculations of life's unequal investment battles.[35]

The impetus to 'naturalize' gender while technologizing the body, which one finds, as I have indicated, in many science fiction and cyborg film discourses besides Eve of

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[34]Ibid., 181.

[35]Haraway, "Investment Strategies," 145.

Destruction, is an entirely compensatory move that implicitly narrates the (gendered) body's own undoing as a natural category. But noting this, one must still come to terms with one of the fundamental contradictions embodied by Eve 8. For although gender and sexual difference are unambiguously intensified in Eve of Destruction these categories are at the same time polemicized by the film's themes. Thus, and I will return to this point shortly, even though the film presents us with a somewhat conventional sci-fi fembot in the tradition of Metropolis's "machine-vamp" dually fetishized as mother and sexual object, Eve through the agency of her cybernetic other, manages to kill the primary Symbolic representative of the patriarchal order that would construct them that way, hence Eve's father.

First, let us confront the issue of fetishism. The gendering of technologically augmented bodies is a means, however provisional, of disavowing anxiety and loss, but it is also a function of the commercial cinema's mandate to ensure scopic pleasure.[36] Of course one could argue that the rendering of technology in science fiction in such *visible* and identifiable terms, that is, by displacing it onto unambiguously gendered bodies, is also a gesture of authentication, hence a measure taken in the narrative cinema (especially science fiction cinema) to mark the real, as Mary Ann Doane points out.[37] But the 'overvaluation of the object' that characterizes so many representations of bodies also functions as a "quite precise form of fetishism," especially when it is imbricated with both

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[36]The serial reproduction of the gendered body in film thus exceeds its narrative representation as well. For the body is technologized by the cinematic apparatus itself--a "bachelor-machine" as Constance Penley remarks, in the business of fulfilling the "dream of the mechanical reproduction of art, and artificial birth or reanimation"--which successively constructs and 'delivers' in its illusions embodiments of artificial femininity and masculinity. "Feminism, Film Theory and Bachelor Machines," 57.

[37]Mary Ann Doane, "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine," Body/Politics, Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1990): 163-176.

femininity and the phantasmatics of technology.[38] It is precisely this combination of technology and the female body in conjunction with nostalgia that subtends the structures of fetishistic technophilia pervasive in the science fiction film, and, by the same token, its recurrent interest in the maternal. This interest is fraught on many levels, as the term nostalgia itself implies. While nostalgia commonly denotes a sentimental longing for the past, its etymological origins in the Greek *nostos*, meaning to return, and *algos*, meaning pain, evoke the less than idyllic quality of pathos--again, quoting Bruno, nostalgia "...is the trace of the dream of unity, of its impossibility...the Imaginary exists as a loss."[39]

Supplying the missing sexual component of "lack" in Christian Metz's analysis of cinematic fetishism, Doane argues:

> Technological fetishism, through its alliance of technology with the process of concealing and revealing lack, is theoretically returned to the body of the mother...theory understands the obsession with technology as a tension of movement toward and away from the mother.[40]

Reiterating Doane's argument, technological fetishism, or technophilia, can be interpreted as a discourse of origins, the ground of which is the maternal body, or more precisely, the original *loss* of her body. The subsequent oscillation between the desire for originary plenitude and the horror of self-annihilation inspired by the mother's "lack," hence "the movement toward and away from the mother," is said to constitute the Freudian subject as such. In Eve of Destruction, nostalgic desire is invariably symptomatic of this loss, as is the film's insistent overvaluation of the maternal as fetish. At the same time, technology as "transitional object" is grafted onto the maternal, hence mitigating on another front, as

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[38]Doane, 173.

[39]Bruno, 191.

[40]Ibid., 174.

Claude Baible has suggested, "the pain of foreclosure from the Other."[41] Laura Mulvey's definition of the fetish, presently quoted at length, crystallizes a number of points here:

> A fetish is something in which someone invests a meaning and a value beyond or beside its actual meaning and value. Why an object should take on this special significance is mysterious, but adds to its fascination in the eye of the beholder. This process involves the willing surrender of knowledge to belief but, however intensely invested, belief is vulnerable, always partly acknowledging what it simultaneously disavows. While the fetish object is mysterious and fascinating to the fetishist, it is also a primitive sign, signaling a meaning outside, unavailable to, consciousness and language. While supporting the suspension of disbelief, it also materializes the unspeakable, the disavowed, the repressed. Like a red flag at the point of danger, the fetish object calls attention to a nodal point of vulnerability, whether within the psychic structure of an individual or the cultural structure of a social group. The fetish is a symptom. It has a semiotic aspect but one that is wrapped up in the obscurity of a cipher. So, while fetishism may disavow a personal or collective pain or anxiety, by way of elevating an object to the status of a symptom, it also allows access to its own decoding.[42]

It is thus the founding loss of the mother, and the nostalgia symptomatic of that loss, that underwrites the representation of the techno-fetishized maternal body in Eve of Destruction. For if the doubling and subsequent fetishizing of Dr. Eve Simmons, a successful scientist engaged in the enterprise of technological reproduction, as consummately feminine and dangerous cyborg/sex-machine enacts a popular misogynist fantasy in the tradition of Metropolis, it also anxiously, nostalgically reflects the fact that: "[s]exual reproduction is [now] one kind of reproductive strategy among many...[i]deologies of sexual reproduction can no longer reasonably call on notions of sex and sex role as organic aspects in natural objects like organisms and families."[43] Indeed the breakdown of the 'biological family' is all but a *fait accompli* in this film, and stems, as

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[41]Qtd. in Doane, 174.

[42]Laura Mulvey, "Xala, Ousmane Sembene 1974: The Carapace That Failed," Camera Obscura 31 (January-May 1993): 52-53.

[43]Haraway, "Manifesto," 162.

far as the film is concerned, from a postmodern reproductive crisis in which the fragmentation of the maternal is central. The specter of mechanical reproduction as well as reproductive technologies such as IVF, artificial insemination, embryo transfer, surrogacy, challenge at a fundamental level the "guarantee of history" of which the mother's body is the primary support. From this perspective, the film's obsessive return to the 'womb' of the cyborg through frequent endoscopic tracking shots, not to mention the cyborg's own obsessive attempt to retrace her history and to find her lost mother (both of which of course are not her own) are dramatic, if anything, because of their implicit futility. As Haraway reminds us, "The cyborg incarnation is outside salvation history."[44]

Taken together, Eve Simmons and Eve 8, her would-be unconscious, manage to do much violence to the oedipal narrative of history and its otherwise stable categories of sexual difference. For one thing, they render fathers, as Haraway's cyborg would have it, "inessential" to this narrative--Eve Simmons, by virtue of her own technological self-(re)production and refusal of her traditional role as mother, and her cyborg other through her more literal violence against men, namely the murder of Eve's own father. Recycling the true Maria/false Maria dichotomy at work in Metropolis, the cyborg outwardly enacts what Eve Simmons otherwise represses in keeping with dominant codes of female propriety. Loosened though they may be, these codes evidently still apply--even to postfeminist women professionals. But if Eve Simmons' unconscious unleashes a monster in the form of an ironically hyperfeminine performance of (her)self, this monster invaluably offers an alternative model of subjectivity based on incoherence and multiplicity. Thus the cyborg not only "[materializes] the unspeakable, the disavowed, the repressed"[45] it, like Ripley in Alien's final sequel, incorporates and runs with it.

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[44]Ibid., 150.

[45]Laura Mulvey, "Xala," 53.

CONCLUSION

> Who, surprised and horrified by the fantastic tumult of her drives (for she was made to believe that a well-adjusted normal woman has a...divine composure), hasn't accused herself of being a monster? Who, feeling a funny desire stirring inside her (to sing, to write, to dare to speak, in short, to bring out something new), hasn't thought she was sick? Well, her shameful sickness is that she resists death, that she makes trouble.
>
> -Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"

Apprehending technology's relationship to the female body in terms of monstrosity and related notions of abjection, the grotesque, the alien, etc. involves a certain amount of risk--perhaps not unlike that taken by Ripley in the final scene of Alien[3]. As a subjective and bodily category, monstrosity has long been associated with the feminine, and much to the denigration of 'real-life', historical women. At its most fundamental, the notion of monstrosity connotes anomaly, abnormality, difference from the human norm; conversely, as Georges Canguilhem put it, "the normally formed human being is the zero-degree of monstrosity."[1] By the same token, Western modes of thought have, from the time of Aristotle, conceived of the human norm in specifically masculine terms, hence constructing *woman* as anomalous, and therefore inferior to, the (human/)male norm. That the devaluation of women, and of difference, has so often given way to the pejorative identification of femininity with the monstrous (and vice versa) in literature, art, and philosophy comes as little surprise. This is not to say that the relationship between women and monsters is an exclusive or essential one. However, in a symbolic system defined by poststructuralists as "phallogocentric," these categories, traditionally dispatched to a position of negativity vis-à-vis the norm, do bear an inferential and structural connection--especially insofar as the binary logic of such a system depends on

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[1]Quoted by Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects, 78.

the devaluation of 'otherness' in order to maintain the positivity of the norm.[2] Moreover, female bodies, as Rosi Braidotti argues, have long been, by virtue of their capacity to change shape during pregnancy and childbirth, perceived in relation to man (sic) as "morphologically dubious."[3] Recalling Bakhtin's description of the grotesque, which he attaches most prominently to the image of senile pregnant hags, the female reproductive body is perceived, in contrast to the classical body of modernity, as excessive and open, protruding, irregular, heterogeneous, fluid and changing--in a word, monstrous.

Today it is technology, as Alice Rayner points out, which provides "the source for images of 'monsters'...as humans grapple with their own power to transform themselves."[4] As I have demonstrated over the course of this thesis, signifiers of femininity have provided a rich source of metaphors for the construction of machines as monstrous. Read symptomatically, or "sexo-semiotically," to invoke Sophia's term[5], the monstrosity of the technological-feminine figured variously in Metropolis, the Alien films, and Eve of Destruction reveals itself as precisely that which technology and technological reason would strive to disavow and/or repress--hence the primordial dimensions of woman's sexuality and reproductive power. This power, which Kristeva describes as "asymmetrical, irrational, wily, [and] uncontrollable"[6]

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[2]Ibid., 80. As Terry Eagleton writes, "Woman is not just an other in the sense of something beyond [man's] ken, but an other intimately related to him as the image of what he is not, and therefore as an essential reminder of what he is. Man therefore needs this other even as he spurns it, is constrained to give a positive identity to what he regards as no-thing," Literary Theory: An Introduction, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983): 132-33.

[3]Braidotti, 80.

[4]Alice Rayner, "Cyborgs and Replicants: On the Boundaries," Discourse (Spring 1994): 125.

[5]Sophia defines the sexo-semiotics of technology as "a type of psychoanalytic ethnography concerned with the poetics and erotics of tools." "*Every tool is a poem*" she writes, "not only because it serves humans in unconscious and metaphorical as well as conscious and irrational ways, but also because it is *in itself* the work of poetic operations which hollow out, displace, condense, re-work, re-present, and over-work matter and energy across space and time" (her emphasis); "Exterminating Fetuses," 48.

arises in each film's vision of feminized technology. It is the phantasmatic ground of representation for Metropolis's machine-vamp and Eve of Destruction's cyborg, as well as the Alien trilogy's various aliens and alienating technological spaces. As I have also suggested, the profound ambivalence that informs the technological-feminine and the association between "woman" and "machine" dramatized in each film transcends its narrative representation as well. For the fascination and horror attached to the technological-feminine, and the subsequent logic of attraction and repulsion that, in different and complex ways, characterize the spectator's relationship to it, are also produced through various mechanisms and formal aspects particular to the technology of cinema itself. Thus while the technological-feminine may be subject to the implicitly nostalgic operations of technophilia and fetishistic disavowal, it has also been shown, especially in the case of the Alien films, to play into more 'perverse' pre-oedipal cinematic pleasures. Whatever the case, the symbolic function and power assumed by femininity and the maternal reinforce the threat of technology to established concepts of identity and the "real," as well as corollary distinctions between self and other, subject and object. In the words of Jean Baudrillard, the maternal, like technological reproduction, is "diabolical in its very essence; it makes something fundamental vacillate."[7]

Locating herself, as she says, in "the belly of the monster," Donna Haraway readily embraces what Baudrillard has thus painted in nightmarish terms, that "[o]ur machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert."[8] For her, the monstrous fusion between human and machine that produces the cyborg is ultimately promising; it means freedom, however tempered, from pure and reified categories of self, human, nature, the body, Woman, and the like:

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[6]Kristeva, 70.

[7]Jean Baudrillard, Simulations (New York City: Semiotext(e), 1983), qtd. in Doane, 170.

[8]Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 152.

> These boundary creatures are, literally, *monsters*, a word that shares more than its root with the verb to demonstrate. Monsters signify...The power-differentiated and highly contested modes of being of monsters may be signs of possible worlds--and they are surely signs of worlds for which "we" are responsible.[9]

After exploring such "boundary creatures" in the realm of cinematic representation, it is clear that while they share with Haraway's cyborg their hybridity, multiplicity, paradoxical and, of course, technological natures, they are nevertheless produced by vastly different modes of signification. Unlike Haraway's cyborg, these cinematic creatures are informed by other processes, *unconscious* cinematic processes of displacement, deferral, projection, fetishization, identification, etc. that construct women in peculiar ways. In the examples looked at, the conjunction between technology and the female body invokes or becomes synonymous with phobia and crisis, and ultimately plays itself out as a conflict between the oedipal narrative of biological reproduction and the reproductive technologies that would render this narrative obsolete. Hence the significant and recurring presence of the maternal. In contrast to Haraway's genderless 'cyborg worlds,' time, however dislocated and unstable, is marked in these films on an oedipal calendar.[10]

But having located *myself* in the belly of *this* monster, this oedipal narrative, how might I productively engage with monstrous boundary creatures like the alien, the cyborg, the machine-vamp, and concepts like abjection and the grotesque? While Haraway's cyborg paradigm is both forceful and compelling, its break with categories like "gender," "history," the "unconscious," hence its ability to "skip the step of original unity, of identification in the

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[9]Haraway, "The Actors are Cyborg, Nature is Coyote, and the Geography is Elsewhere: Postcript to 'Cyborgs at Large'," Technoculture, Constance Penley and Andrew Ross, eds. (Oxford and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 22.

[10]Haraway writes, "The cyborg incarnation is outside salvation history. Nor does it mark time on an oedipal calendar, attempting to heal the terrible cleavages of gender in an oral symbiotic utopia or post-oedipal apocalypse...the most terrible and perhaps most promising monsters in cyborg worlds are embodied in non-oedipal narratives with a different logic of repression, which we need to understand for our survival," "Cyborg Manifesto," 150.

Western sense,"[11] is not reflected by its cinematic counterparts who, for the most part, remain entrenched in (Western) narratives of sexuality, loss, and desire. I venture to say that as popular texts, this is precisely what grounds their widespread appeal. More importantly though, the popular cyborg fictions I have examined bring into play crucial issues of subjectivity and identity that Haraway does not address--issues relating to unconscious identification, sexual difference-- *anxiety*. As Braidotti argues, Haraway "announces a world 'beyond gender,' stating that sexed identity is obsolete without showing the steps and the points of exit from the old, gender-polarized system."[12] Popular film cyborgs thus usefully demonstrate that in postmodern technological worlds conflict and resistance are still implicated in matters relating to gender as well as many other 'comfortable old' dualisms.

Nevertheless, the appeal of Haraway's project, keeping in mind the objectives of a political manifesto, lies precisely in its polemical force. The cyborg's refusal of nostalgia, its embrace of partial identities, its miscegenation along multiple axes of race, age, class, etc., its monstrous transgression of otherwise sacrosanct boundaries, presents, if anything, an alternative--another story. It responds in utopian and progressive terms to what film cyborgs have a tendency to react to in phobic and often regressive terms. As Istvan Csisery-Ronay, Jr. puts it, "Haraway's originality, in terms equally valid for critical theory and SF, is her notion of imagining utopia by moving through the 'heart' of dystopia. Recovering the cyborg from [its] role as ideological legitimator (for conservative humanists and naive technophiles both), Haraway attempts to clear a new path for utopian rationality through the sprawl of instrumental rationalization."[13] Perhaps feminists will simply have to be cyborgs in order to

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[11] "Cyborg Manifesto," 151.

[12] Braidotti, 170.

[13] Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. "The SF of Theory: Baudrillard and Haraway," Science Fiction Studies 18.3 (1991): 387-404.

sensibly converse with, while contesting the politics of, ever-advancing technologies in increasingly complex cultures. But part of me would still rather be a goddess than a cyborg.

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